Merrill's English Texts

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

SHAKESPEARE

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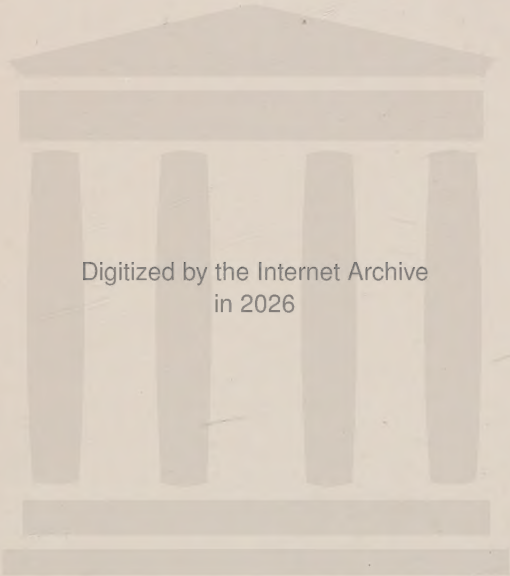
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IVDICIO PYLIVM, GENIO SOCRATEM, ARTE MARONEM
TERRA TEGIT, POPVLVS MÆRET, OLYMPVS HABET
STAY PASSENGER WHY GOEST THOV BY SO FAST
READ IF THOV CANST WHOM ENVIOVS DEATH HATH PLAST
WITH IN THIS MONVMENT SHAKSPEARE: WITH WHOME
QVICK NATVRE DIDE WHOSE NAME DOTH DECK Y TOMBE
FAR MORE THEN COST: SIEH ALL Y HE HATH WRITT
LEAVES LIVING ART, BVT PAGE, TO SERVE HIS WITT

BUST OF SHAKESPEARE IN TRINITY CHURCH, STRATFORD

His grave is directly beneath the bust

Merrill's English Texts

SHAKESPEARE'S A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

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Merrill's English Texts

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EDITOR'S NOTE

THE text here presented has been carefully collated with that of six or seven of the best editions. Where there was any disagreement we have adopted the readings which seemed most reasonable and were supported by the best authority.

Professor Meiklejohn's exhaustive notes form the substance of those here used; and his plan, as set forth in the "General Notice" annexed, has been carried out in these volumes. But as these editions of the plays are intended rather for pupils in school and college than for ripe Shakespearian scholars, we have not hesitated to prune his notes of whatever was thought to be too learned for our purpose, or on other grounds was deemed irrelevant to it.

GENERAL NOTICE

"An attempt has been made in these editions to interpret Shakespeare by the aid of Shakespeare himself. The Method of Comparison has been constantly employed; and the language used by him in one place has been compared with the language used in other places in similar circumstances, as well as with older English and with newer English.

"The first purpose in this elaborate annotation is, of course, the full working out of Shakespeare's meaning. The Editor has in all circumstances taken as much pains with this as if he had been making out the difficult and obscure terms of a will in which he himself was personally interested; and he submits that this thorough excavation of the meaning of a really profound thinker is one of the very best kinds of training that a boy or girl can receive at school. This is to read the very mind of Shakespeare, and to weave his thoughts into the fibre of one's own mental constitution. And always new rewards come to the careful reader—in the shape of new meanings, recognition of thoughts he had before missed, of relations between the characters that had hitherto escaped him. For reading Shakespeare is just like examining Nature; there are no hollownesses, there is no scamped work, for Shakespeare is as patiently exact and as first-hand as Nature herself.

"Besides this thorough working-out of Shakespeare's meaning, advantage has been taken of the opportunity to teach his English —to make each play an introduction to the *English of Shakespeare*. For this purpose copious collections of similar phrases have been gathered from other plays; his idioms have been dwelt upon; his peculiar use of words; his style and his rhythm. Some teachers may consider that too many instances are given; but, in teaching, as in everything else, the old French saying is true:

Assez n'y a, s'il trop n'y a. The teacher need not require each pupil to give him *all* the instances collected. If each gives one or two, it will probably be enough; and, among them all, it is certain that one or two will stick in the memory.

"It were much to be hoped that Shakespeare should become more and more of a study, and that every boy and girl should have a thorough knowledge of at least one play of Shakespeare before leaving school. It would be one of the best lessons in human life. It would also have the effect of bringing back into the too pale and formal English of modern times a large number of pithy and vigorous phrases which would help to develop as well as to reflect vigor in the characters of the readers. Shakespeare used the English language with more power than any other writer that ever lived—he made it do more and say more than it had ever done; he made it speak in a more original way; and his combinations of words are perpetual provocations and invitations to originality and to newness of insight."—J. M. D. Meiklejohn, M. A., Late Professor of Pedagogy in the University of St. Andrews.

INTRODUCTION

LIFE AND WORKS OF SHAKESPEARE

"Shakespeare was born, it is thought, April 23, 1564, the son of a comfortable burgess of Stratford-on-Avon. While he was stil' young, his father fell into poverty, and an interrupted educatioi left the son an inferior scholar. He had 'small Latin and less Greek.' But by dint of genius and by living in a society in which all sorts of information were attainable, he became an accomplished man. The story told of his deer-stealing in Charlecote woods is without proof, but it is likely that his youth was wild and passionate. At nineteen he married Ann Hathaway, seven years older than himself, and was probably unhappy with her. For this reason or from poverty, or from the driving of the genius that led him to the stage, he left Stratford about 1586–1587, and went to London at the age of twenty-two; and, falling in with Marlowe, Greene, and the rest, he became an actor and a playwright, and may have lived their unrestrained and riotous life for some years.

"**His First Period.**—It is probable that before leaving Stratford he had sketched a part at least of his *Venus and Adonis*. It is full of the country sights and sounds, of the ways of birds and animals, such as he saw when wandering in Charlecote woods. Its rich and overladen poetry and its warm coloring made him, when it was published, in 1593, at once the favorite of men like Lord Southampton, and lifted him into fame. But before that date he had done work for the stage by touching up old plays and writing new ones. We seem to trace his 'prentice hand' in many dramas of the time, but the first he is usually thought to have retouched is *Titus Andronicus*, and, some time after, the First Part of *Henry VI.*

"*Love's Labour 's Lost*, the first of his original plays, in which he

quizzed and excelled the Euphuists in wit, was followed by the rapid farce of *The Comedy of Errors*. Out of these frolics of intellect and action he passed into pure poetry in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and mingled into fantastic beauty the classic legend, the mediæval fairyland, and the clownish life of the English mechanic. Italian story then laid its charm upon him, and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* preceded the southern glow of passion in *Romeo and Juliet*, in which he first reached tragic power. They complete, with *Love's Labour 's Won*, afterwards recast as *All 's Well That Ends Well*, the love plays of his early period. We may, perhaps, add to them the second act of an older play, *Edward III*. We should certainly read along with them, as belonging to the same passionate time, his *Rape of Lucrece*, a poem finally printed in 1594, one year later than the *Venus and Adonis*.

"The patriotic feeling of England, also represented in Marlowe and Peele, now seized on him, and he turned from love to begin his great series of historical plays with *Richard II*, 1593–1594. *Richard III* followed quickly. To introduce it and to complete the subject, he recast the Second and Third Parts of *Henry VI* (written by some unknown authors), and ended his first period with *King John*—five plays in a little more than two years.

"His Second Period, 1596–1602.—In *The Merchant of Venice* Shakespeare reached entire mastery over his art. A mingled woof of tragic and comic threads is brought to its highest point of color when Portia and Shylock meet in court. Pure comedy followed in his retouch of the old *Taming of the Shrew*, and all the wit of the world, mixed with noble history, met next in the three comedies of *Falstaff*, the First and Second Parts of *Henry IV*, and the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. The historical plays were then closed with *Henry V*, a splendid dramatic song to the glory of England.

"The Globe theater, in which he was one of the proprietors, was built in 1599. In the comedies he wrote for it, Shakespeare turned to write of love again, not to touch its deeper passion as before, but to play with it in all its lighter phases. The flashing dialogue of *Much Ado About Nothing* was followed by the far-off forest world of *As You Like It*, where 'the time fleets carelessly,' and

Rosalind's character is the play. Amid all its gracious lightness steals in a new element, and the melancholy of Jaques is the first touch we have of the older Shakespeare who had 'gained his experience, and whose experience nad made him sad.' And yet it was but a touch; *Twelfth Night* shows no trace of it, though the play that followed, *All 's Well That Ends Well*, again strikes a sadder note. We find this sadness fully grown in the later sonnets, which are said to have been finished about 1602. They were published in 1609.

"Shakespeare's life changed now, and his mind changed with it. He had grown wealthy during this period and famous, and was loved by society. He was the friend of the Earls of Southampton and Essex, and of William Herbert, Lord Pembroke. The queen patronized him; all the best literary society was his own. He had rescued his father from poverty, bought the best house in Stratford and much land, and was a man of wealth and comfort. Suddenly all his life seems to have grown dark. His best friends fell into ruin, Essex perished on the scaffold, Southampton went to the Tower, Pembroke was banished from the Court; he may himself, as some have thought, have been concerned in the rising of Essex. Added to this, we may conjecture, from the imaginative pageantry of the sonnets, that he had unwisely loved, and been betrayed in his love by a dear friend. Disgust of his profession as an actor, and public and private ill weighed heavily on him, and in darkness of spirit, though still clinging to the business of the theater, he passed from comedy to write of the sterner side of the world, to tell the tragedy of mankind.

"His Third Period, 1602–1608, begins with the last days of Queen Elizabeth. It contains all the great tragedies, and opens with the fate of Hamlet, who felt, like the poet himself, that 'the time was out of joint.' Hamlet, the dreamer, may well represent Shakespeare as he stood aside from the crash that overwhelmed his friends, and thought on the changing world. The tragi-comedy of *Measure for Measure* was next written, and is tragic in thought throughout. *Julius Cæsar, Othello, Macbeth, Lear, Troilus and Cressida* (finished from an incomplete work of his youth), *Antony*

and Cleopatra, Coriolanus, Timon (only in part his own), were all written in these five years. The darker sins of men, the unpitying fate which slowly gathers round and falls on men, the avenging wrath of conscience, the cruelty and punishment of weakness, the treachery, lust, jealousy, ingratitude, madness of men, the follies of the great, and the fickleness of the mob are all, with a thousand other varying moods and passions, painted, and felt as his own while he painted them, during this stern time.

"**His Fourth Period, 1608–1613.**—As Shakespeare wrote of these things, he passed out of them, and his last days are full of the gentle and loving calm of one who has known sin and sorrow and fate but has risen above them into peaceful victory. Like his great contemporary, Bacon, he left the world and his own evil time behind him, and with the same quiet dignity sought the innocence and stillness of country life. The country breathes through all the dramas of this time. The flowers Perdita gathers in *The Winter's Tale*, and the frolic of the sheep-shearing he may have seen in the Stratford meadows; the song of Fidele in *Cymbeline* is written by one who already feared no more the frown of the great, nor slander nor censure rash, and was looking forward to the time when men should say of him—

> Quiet consummation have;
> And renownèd be thy grave!

"Shakespeare probably left London in 1609, and lived in the house he had bought at Stratford-on-Avon. He was reconciled, it is said, to his wife, and the plays he writes speak of domestic peace and forgiveness. The story of *Marina*, which he left unfinished, and which two later writers expanded into the play of *Pericles*, is the first of his closing series of dramas. *The Two Noble Kinsmen* of Fletcher, a great part of which is now, on doubtful grounds, I think, attributed to Shakespeare, and in which the poet sought the inspiration of Chaucer, would belong to this period. *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest* bring his history up to 1612, and in the next year he closed his poetic life by writing, with Fletcher, *Henry VIII*. For three years he kept silence, and then,

on the 23d of April, 1616, the day he reached the age of fifty-two, as is supposed, he died.

"**His Work.**—We can only guess with regard to Shakespeare's life; we can only guess with regard to his character. We have tried to find out what he was from his sonnets and from his plays, but every attempt seems to be a failure. We cannot lay our hand on anything and say for certain that it was spoken by Shakespeare out of his own character. The most personal thing in all his writings is one that has scarcely been noticed. It is the Epilogue to *The Tempest;* and if it be, as is most probable, the last thing he ever wrote, then its cry for forgiveness, its tale of inward sorrow, only to be relieved by prayer, give us some dim insight into how the silence of those three years was passed; while its declaration of his aim in writing, 'which was to please,'—the true definition of an artist's aim,—should make us cautious in our efforts to define his character from his works. Shakespeare made men and women whose dramatic action on each other, and towards a catastrophe, was intended to please the public, not to reveal himself.

"No commentary on his writings, no guesses about his life or character, are worth much which do not rest on this canon as their foundation: What he did, thought, learned, and felt, he did, thought, learned, and felt as an artist. . . . Fully influenced, as we see in *Hamlet* he was, by the graver and more philosophic cast of thought of the later time of Elizabeth; passing on into the reign of James I, when pedantry took the place of gayety, and sensual the place of imaginative love in the drama, and artificial art the place of that art which itself is nature; he preserves to the last the natural passion, the simple tenderness, the sweetness, grace, and fire of the youthful Elizabethan poetry. *The Winter's Tale* is as lovely a love story as *Romeo and Juliet; The Tempest* is more instinct with imagination than *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* and as great in fancy; and yet there are fully twenty years between them. The only change is in the increase of power, and in a closer and graver grasp of human nature. Around him the whole tone and manner of the drama altered for the worse, but his work grew to the close in strength and beauty."—STOPFORD BROOKE.

THE PLAY: A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Early Editions. — There are four old editions of this play, and the received text is an eclectic text made up from the four, with the addition of several conjectural emendations of the earlier editors and commentators, some of which appear too probable and valuable to be rejected even by the most conservative adherents of the original texts. The first of these editions was in quarto form, and appears thus on the Register of the Stationers' Company: '8 Oct. 1600 Tho. Fysher] A booke called a Mydsomer nights Dreame.' The second was also a quarto, and appeared in the same year, 'printed by Iames Roberts, 1600.' The second was merely a reprint of the first, and was probably a pirated edition printed for the use of the players. It was the edition however that was followed in the famous first folio of 1623 — the third of our editions — some of its obvious misprints being copied there in spite of its editors' depreciatory remarks about sundry earlier 'stolne and surreptitious' copies of the plays. The fourth edition of importance is of course the second folio of 1632, a reprint of the first, containing conjectural emendations, which are however more often wrong than right.

Date of Composition. — The earliest known reference to the play occurs in the *Palladis Tamia* of Francis Meres, published in 1598. Its composition is dated by Drake, 1593; by Chalmers, 1598; by Malone, 1594; by Delius, later than 1594; by Fleay, 1592; but the evidence points most strongly to 1593 or 1594. It is difficult to resist the belief that the passage in Act II (i, 88–117) in which Titania describes the recent bad seasons, owed its point to the similar weather in the years 1593 and 1594, which would still be fresh in people's memories. Again, the lines in Act V (i, 52, 53) alluding to the recent hapless fortune of a poet and a scholar, correspond well either to Spenser's poem, *The Tears of*

the Muses, published in 1591, or to Robert Greene's miserable death in 1592.

Metrical tests, moreover, prove that the play was an early work written about the same time as the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. It contains a large proportion of rhyming lines — one of the safest marks of its being an early work, as rhymed lines become fewer and fewer in Shakespeare's later plays. But too much must not be made of this in comparing it with plays of the same period, as the character of our play naturally called for a more liberal use of rhyme than usual. The succession of rhymes repeating a single sound were of course introduced with a special purpose. We find also comparatively few lines where the pause or break occurs in any part of the line save at the end. This is a second test of the date of the composition of a play, as Shakespeare in his earlier plays usually has his pauses and breaks at the end of the line, while gradually he came more and more to carry on the sense from one line to another without a pause at the end of the line, with an obvious gain to the flexibility and variety of his dramatic dialogue. A third test of time from the meter is the use of weak and unemphatic monosyllabic endings. These scarcely appear at all in the earlier plays — the present play contains but one — while they are frequent in plays like *Macbeth* and *Anthony and Cleopatra*. Again, double or feminine endings — that is, lines with an extra end-syllable — are very rare in the earlier plays, becoming very numerous in such later plays as *Cymbeline* and *The Tempest*.[1]

Our play then may be fearlessly dated as having been written about 1593 or 1594. It has been conjectured that it was written to grace the wedding of some noble person — Southampton, who was married in 1598, or Essex, who was married in 1590; but from what has been said above, it will be seen that the second date is too early, the other too late. It was probably acted before Eliza-

[1] Mr. Fleay, in his *Shakespeare Manual* (1878), p. 135, gives the following statistics about *A Midsummer-Night's Dream:* Total number of lines, 2251; of prose lines, 441; blank-verse lines, 878; rhymes, five measures, 731; rhymes, short lines, 138; songs, 63; double endings, 29; alternately rhyming lines, 158; two measures, 5; three measures, 3.

beth. The praise of 'single blessedness' (I, i, 74–78) would be pleasing to the ears of the maiden queen, and Oberon's vision (II, i, 144–164) beyond a doubt contains a splendid piece of poetic flattery to Elizabeth.

Time of the Action. — The action of the play is comprised within three days, concluding with the night of the new moon; though there is some confusion of time, as will be seen, the note of time at the beginning being inconsistent with the discourse of the clowns in Act III (i, 49).[1]

Sources of the Plot. — The plot of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is entirely Shakespeare's own, though, as usual, in working it out he borrowed freely from other sources. He had read carefully the life of Theseus in North's *Plutarch*, and he may have read Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*. For the interlude of Pyramus and Thisbe he was doubtless indebted to Golding's translation of *Ovid*, and Chaucer's *Thisbe of Babylon*. Robin Goodfellow and his other fairies he owed to the rich folklore of his boyhood, but Oberon may have been suggested to him by Greene's *James IV of Scotland*.

The Play on the Stage. — The play has not kept its place upon the stage, and it is unlikely ever to be successful there. As Hazlitt has said, '*A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, when acted, is converted from a delightful fiction into a dull pantomime. . . . Fancy cannot be embodied any more than a simile can be painted; and it is as idle to attempt it as to personate *Wall* or *Moonshine*. . . . The boards of a theatre and the region of fancy are not the same thing.' The most amusing circumstance in the history of the play is Pepys' record in his *Diary*, under date September 29, 1662: 'To the King's Theatre, where we saw *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, which I had never seen before, nor shall ever again, for it is the most insipid, ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life.'

The Fairy World. — Shakespeare wrote *A Midsummer-Night's*

[1] Mr. Daniel, in the *Transactions of the New Shakespeare Society* (1877–79), p. 149, gives the following 'time-analysis' of the play:

Day 1. Act I.
" 2. Acts II, III, and part of sc. i. Act IV.
" 3. Part of sc. i. Act IV, sc. ii. Act IV, and Act V.

Dream at a time of his life when fancy was strong, and a sense of the prose realities of life comparatively weak. The action of the play depends on circumstances hardly even hypothetically possible. It is quite without a parallel in dramatic literature. The only other play of Shakespeare resembling it in its preternatural machinery is *The Tempest*, which however is of quite another mood in feeling and thought, and, with perhaps higher attributes, wants its peculiar fascination. It is, as Coleridge described it, 'one continued specimen of the dramatized lyrical,' the whole a fabric of the most creative and visionary imagination. We move amid a delightful world of ideal forms, and at the touch of the magician these 'airy nothings' assume for us 'a local habitation and a name.' The charm he has cast around the fairy world has changed permanently, for English-speaking people, their conceptions of its inhabitants. Under the spell of his creation we have forgotten all the ugliness and malignity of the old fairy world, and now we see only its abiding grace and beauty; and indeed it is hardly too much to say that it is to the master-hand of Shakespeare that our children mainly owe their heritage of an imaginative world of fascinating beauty, peopled by ideal forms full of sportive kindliness, to be regarded with perpetual interest and love instead of repugnance and terror.

The Characters. — In our play the unreal and shadowy world becomes real to us, while the real world with its actual life becomes less distinct and real looking, as is quite consistent in a dream. Consequently the human interest is of less importance than the supernatural — the two pairs of young lovers are graceful figures enough, but they do not touch us with the quick sympathies of fellow men and women, and we find ourselves wonderfully indifferent to their crossed loves and other perplexities. Duke Theseus and Hippolyta are heroic mediæval figures, full of splendor and romantic quality, but they do not breathe with the same life as the kings and queens of later plays. Most of the persons are too idealized and distant for us to feel their brotherhood as English men and women. It is only bully Bottom and his honest fellows that bring us back to the village green and homely familiar English

life. From their lips we hear the everyday speech of kindly Warwickshire, and with them we feel that we stand once more on the familiar earth. Their humor is all the more delightful after we have breathed for a while the upper air, and already gives promise of the infinitely richer and fuller but hardly more genial and human humor that we are to find in later plays.

CRITICAL OPINIONS

"In *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, Shakspere's humor has enriched itself by coalescing with the fancy. The comic is here no longer purely comic; it is a mingled web, shot through with the beautiful. . . . Bottom is incomparably a finer efflorescence of the absurd than any preceding character of Shakspere's invention. How lean and impoverished his fellows, the Athenian craftsmen, confess themselves in the presence of the many-sided genius of Nick Bottom! Rarely is a great artist appreciated in the degree that Bottom is. — 'He hath simply the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens; yea, and the best person, too; and he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.' With what a magnificent multiplicity of gifts he is endowed! How vast has the bounty of nature been to him! The self-doubtful Snug hesitates to undertake the moderate duties assigned to the lion. Bottom, though his chief humor is for a tyrant, knows not how to suppress his almost equal gift for playing a lady. . . . And as to the part assigned to the too bashful Snug — that Bottom can undertake in either of two styles, or in both, so that the Duke must say, 'Let him roar again, let him roar again,' or the ladies may be soothed by the 'aggravated voice' in which he will 'roar you as gently as any sucking dove.'" — DOWDEN, *Shakspere, His Mind and Art.*

"All the scenes of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* which depend upon the desire of the Athenian mechanicals to amuse their prince, are merely comical when taken alone. The characters thus constructed, by passing into the serious portions of the play, infect it with the element of humor; for the simple earnestness of all their clownishness fraternizes in no offensive way with the more poetical moods of high society, and we feel the charm that equalizes all mankind. The pomp of a court is concentrated at a fustian play that is poorly propertied with bush, lantern, and a fellow daubed

with lime. Simpleness and duty tender this contrast, and it comes not amiss. Their crude parody of the fate of Pyramus and Thisbe, done in perfect good faith, is a claim that humble love may have its fortunes too, as well as that of the proud and over-conscious dames who have been roaming through the woods, sick with fancies. What a delightful raillery it is! Yes, we take the point: 'The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.' . . .

"The humor in this play meddles even with love; for that, too, must be the sport of circumstance and superior power, yet always continue to be the deepest motive of mankind. The juice of love's flower dropped on the eyelids of these distempered lovers makes the caprices of passion show and shift; love in idleness becomes love in earnest, as Puck distills the drops of marriage or of mischief. Titania herself is possessed with that common illusion which marries gracious qualities to absurd companionship. Says Puck, —

> Those things do best please me
> That befall preposterously.

But this is fleeting. Shakspeare soon breaks the spell in which some of his most delicate and sprightly verses have revelled. The whole play expresses humor on a revel, and brings into one human feeling the supernature, the caprice and gross mischance, the serious drift of life." — Weiss, *Wit, Humor, and Shakspeare.*

SHAKESPEARE'S GRAMMAR AND VERSIFICATION

Shakespeare lived at a time when the grammar and vocabulary of the English language were in a state of transition. Various points were not yet settled; and so Shakespeare's grammar is not only somewhat different from our own but is by no means uniform in itself. In the Elizabethan age, "almost any part of speech can be used as any other part of speech. An adverb can be used as a verb, 'They *askance* their eyes'; as a noun, 'the *backward* and abysm of time'; or as an adjective, 'a *seldom* pleasure.' Any noun, adjective, or intransitive verb can be used as a transitive verb. You can 'happy' your friend, 'malice' or 'foot' your enemy, or 'fall' an axe on his neck. An adjective can be used as an adverb; and you can speak and act 'easy,' 'free,' 'excellent'; or as a noun, and you can talk of 'fair' instead of 'beauty,' and 'a pale' instead of 'a paleness.' Even the pronouns are not exempt from these metamorphoses. A 'he' is used for a man, and a lady is described by a gentleman as 'the fairest *she* he has yet beheld.' In the second place, every variety of apparent grammatical inaccuracy meets us. *He* for *him, him* for *he; spoke* and *took* for *spoken* and *taken;* plural nominatives with singular verbs; relatives omitted where they are now considered necessary; unnecessary antecedents inserted; *shall* for *will, should* for *would, would* for *wish; to* omitted after *I ought,* inserted after *I durst;* double negatives; double comparatives ('more better,' etc.) and superlatives; *such* followed by *which, that* by *as, as* used for *as if; that* for *so that;* and lastly some verbs apparently with two nominatives, and others without any nominative at all." — Dr. Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar.*

Shakespeare's plays are written mainly in what is known as *blank verse;* but they contain a number of riming lines, and a con-

siderable number of prose lines. As a rule, rime is much commoner in the earlier than in the later plays. Thus, *Love's Labour 's Lost* contains nearly 1100 riming lines, while (if we except the songs) *A Winter's Tale* has none. *The Merchant of Venice* has 124.

In speaking, we lay a stress on particular syllables; this stress is called *accent*. When the words of a composition are so arranged that the accent recurs at regular intervals, the composition is said to be *rhythmical*. In blank verse the lines have usually ten syllables, of which the second, fourth, sixth, eighth, and tenth are accented. The line consists, therefore, of five parts, each of which contains an unaccented syllable, followed by an accented one, as in the word *attend*. Each of these five parts forms what is called a *foot* or *measure;* and the five together form a *pentameter*. *Pentameter* is a Greek word signifying "five measures." This is the usual form of a line of blank verse. But a long poem composed entirely of such lines would be monotonous, and for the sake of variety several important modifications have been introduced.

(*a*) After the tenth syllable, one or two unaccented syllables are sometimes added; as—

"Me-thought|you said|you nei|ther lend|nor bor|row."

(*b*) In any foot the accent may be shifted from the second to the first syllable, provided two accented syllables do not come together; as—

"Pluck' the|young suck'|ing cubs'|from the'|she bear'."

(*c*) In such words as *yesterday*, *voluntary*, *honesty*, the syllables *-day*, *-ta-*, and *-ty* falling in the place of the accent are, for the purposes of the verse, regarded as truly accented; as—

"Bars' me|the right'|of vol'-|un-ta'|ry choos'|ing."

(*d*) Sometimes we have a succession of accented syllables; this occurs with monosyllabic feet only; as—

"Why, now, blow wind, swell billow, and swim bark."

(*e*) Sometimes, but more rarely, two or even three unaccented syllables occupy the place of one; as—

"He says|he does,|*be-ing* then|most flat|ter-ed."

(*f*) Lines may have any number of feet from one to six.

Finally, Shakespeare adds much to the pleasing variety of his blank verse by placing the pauses in different parts of the line (especially after the second or third foot), instead of placing them all at the end of lines, as was the earlier custom.

In some cases the rhythm requires that what we usually pronounce as one syllable shall be divided into two, as *fi-er* (fire), *su-er* (sure), *mi-el* (mile), etc.; *too-elve* (twelve), *jaw-ee* (joy). Similarly, *she-on* (-tion or -sion).

It is very important that the student should have plenty of ear-training by means of formal scansion. This will greatly assist him in his reading.

PLAN OF STUDY

To attain the standard of "Perfect Possession," the reader ought to have an intimate and ready knowledge of the subject.

The student ought, first of all, to read the play as a pleasure; then to read it again, with his mind on the characters and the plot; and lastly, to read it for the meanings, grammar, etc.

With the help of the following outline, he can easily draw up for himself short examination papers (1) on each scene, (2) on each act, (3) on the whole play.

1. The plot and story of the play.

(*a*) The general plot.

(*b*) The special incidents.

2. The characters.

Ability to give a connected account of all that is done, and most that is said by each character in the play.

3. The influence and interplay of the characters upon one another.

(*a*) Relation of A to B and of B to A.

(*b*) Relation of A to C and D.

4. Complete possession of the language.

(*a*) Meanings of words.

(*b*) Use of old words, or of words in an old meaning.

(*c*) Grammar.

(*d*) Ability to quote lines to illustrate a grammatical point.

5. Power to reproduce, or quote.

(*a*) What was said by A or B on a particular occasion.

(*b*) What was said by A in reply to B.

(*c*) What argument was used by C at a particular juncture.

(*d*) To quote a line in instance of an idiom or of a peculiar meaning.

6. Power to locate.

(*a*) To attribute a line or statement to a certain person on a certain occasion.

(*b*) To cap a line.

(*c*) To fill in the right word or epithet.

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THESEUS, *Duke of Athens.*
EGEUS, *father to* Hermia.
LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, } *in love with* Hermia.
PHILOSTRATE, *master of the revels to* Theseus.
QUINCE, *a carpenter.*
SNUG, *a joiner.*
BOTTOM, *a weaver.*
FLUTE, *a bellows-mender.*
SNOUT, *a tinker.*
STARVELING, *a tailor.*
HIPPOLYTA, *queen of the Amazons, betrothed to* Theseus.
HERMIA, *daughter to* Egeus, *in love with* Lysander.
HELENA, *in love with* Demetrius.
OBERON, *king of the fairies.*
TITANIA, *queen of the fairies.*
PUCK, *or* ROBIN GOODFELLOW, *a fairy.*
PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, MUSTARDSEED, } *fairies.*
PYRAMUS, THISBE, WALL, MOONSHINE, LION, } *characters in the Interlude performed by the clowns.*
Other fairies attending their King and Queen.
Attendants on THESEUS *and* HIPPOLYTA.

SCENE — ATHENS *and a Wood near it.*

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

ACT I

SCENE I

Athens. The palace of THESEUS

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, *and* Attendants

The. Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace; four happy days bring in
Another moon: but O, methinks, how slow
This old moon wanes! she lingers my desires,
Like to a step-dame, or a dowager,
Long withering out a young man's revenue.

Hip. Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;
Four nights will quickly dream away the time;
And then the moon, like to a silver bow
New-bent in heaven, shall behold the night
Of our solemnities.

The. Go, Philostrate,
Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments;
Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth:
Turn melancholy forth to funerals;
The pale companion is not for our pomp.

[*Exit* PHILOSTRATE

Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword,
And won thy love, doing thee injuries;
But I will wed thee in another key,
With pomp, with triumph, and with revelling.

Enter Egeus, Hermia, Lysander, *and* Demetrius

Ege. Happy be Theseus, our renownèd duke!
The. Thanks, good Egeus: what 's the news with thee?
Ege. Full of vexation come I, with complaint
Against my child, my daughter Hermia. —
Stand forth, Demetrius. — My noble lord,
This man hath my consent to marry her. —
Stand forth, Lysander: — and, my gracious duke,
This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child. —
Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,
And interchang'd love-tokens with my child:
Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung
With feigning voice verses of feigning love;
And stolen the impression of her fantasy
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds, conceits,
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats — messengers
Of strong prevailment in unharden'd youth.
With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart:
Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me,
To stubborn harshness: — and, my gracious duke,
Be 't so she will not here before your Grace
Consent to marry with Demetrius,
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens,
As she is mine, I may dispose of her:

Which shall be either to this gentleman
Or to her death, according to our law
Immediately provided in that case.
The. What say you, Hermia? be advis'd, fair maid:
To you your father should be as a god;
One that compos'd your beauties; yea, and one
To whom you are but as a form in wax,
By him imprinted and within his power
To leave the figure or disfigure it.
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.
Her. So is Lysander.
The. In himself he is;
But in this kind, wanting your father's voice,
The other must be held the worthier.
Her. I would my father look'd but with my eyes.
The. Rather your eyes must with his judgement look.
Her. I do entreat your Grace to pardon me.
I know not by what power I am made bold,
Nor how it may concern my modesty,
In such a presence here to plead my thoughts;
But I beseech your Grace that I may know
The worst that may befall me in this case,
If I refuse to wed Demetrius.
The. Either to die the death, or to abjure
For ever the society of men.
Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires;
Know of your youth, examine well your blood,

Whether, if you yield not to your father's choice,
You can endure the livery of a nun;
For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd,
To live a barren sister all your life,
Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.
Thrice-blessèd they that master so their blood
To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;
But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd
Than that which, withering on the virgin throne,
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness.

Her. So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,
Ere I will yield my virgin patent up
Unto his lordship, whose unwishèd yoke
My soul consents not to give sovereignty.

The. Take time to pause; and by the next new moon —
The sealing-day betwixt my love and me,
For everlasting bond of fellowship —
Upon that day either prepare to die
For disobedience to your father's will,
Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would;
Or on Diana's altar to protest
For aye austerity and single life.

Dem. Relent, sweet Hermia: — and, Lysander, yield
Thy crazèd title to my certain right.

Lys. You have her father's love, Demetrius;
Let me have Hermia's: do you marry him.

Ege. Scornful Lysander! true, he hath my love,
And what is mine my love shall render him.

And she is mine, and all my right of her
I do estate unto Demetrius.

Lys. I am, my lord, as well deriv'd as he,
As well possess'd; my love is more than his;
My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd,
If not with vantage, as Demetrius's;
And, which is more than all these boasts can be,
I am belov'd of beauteous Hermia:
Why should not I then prosecute my right?
Demetrius, I 'll avouch it to his head,
Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,
And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,
Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,
Upon this spotted and inconstant man.

The. I must confess that I have heard so much,
And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof;
But, being overfull of self-affairs,
My mind did lose it. But, Demetrius, come;
And come, Egeus; you shall go with me,
I have some private schooling for you both.
For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself
To fit your fancies to your father's will;
Or else the law of Athens yields you up —
Which by no means we may extenuate —
To death, or to a vow of single life.
Come, my Hippolyta: what cheer, my love?
Demetrius and Egeus, go along:
I must employ you in some business
Against our nuptial; and confer with you
Of something nearly that concerns yourselves.

Ege. With duty and desire we follow you.

[*Exeunt all but* Lysander *and* Hermia

Lys. How now, my love! Why is your cheek so pale?
How chance the roses there do fade so fast?

Her. Belike for want of rain, which I could well
Beteem them from the tempest of mine eyes.

Lys. Ay me! for aught that ever I could read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth;
But, either it was different in blood, —

Her. O cross! too high to be enthrall'd to low!

Lys. Or else misgraffèd in respect of years, —

Her. O spite! too old to be engag'd to young!

Lys. Or else it stood upon the choice of friends, —

Her. O hell! to choose love by another's eye!

Lys. Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,
Making it momentary as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream;
Brief as the lightning in the collied night,
That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,
And ere a man hath power to say, 'Behold!'
The jaws of darkness do devour it up:
So quick bright things come to confusion.

Her. If then true lovers have been ever cross'd,
It stands as an edíct in destiny:
Then let us teach our trial patience,
Because it is a customary cross;

As due to love as thoughts, and dreams, and sighs,
Wishes, and tears, poor fancy's followers.

Lys. A good persuasion: therefore, hear me, Hermia.
I have a widow aunt, a dowager
Of great revénue, and she hath no child:
From Athens is her house remote seven leagues;
And she respects me as her only son.
There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee;
And to that place the sharp Athenian law
Cannot pursue us. If thou lov'st me, then,
Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night;
And in the wood, a league without the town,
Where I did meet thee once with Helena
To do observance to a morn of May,
There will I stay for thee.

Her. My good Lysander!
I swear to thee by Cupid's strongest bow,
By his best arrow with the golden head,
By the simplicity of Venus' doves,
By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves,
And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen
When the false Trojan under sail was seen,
By all the vows that ever men have broke,
In number more than ever women spoke, —
In that same place thou hast appointed me,
To-morrow truly will I meet with thee.

Lys. Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

Enter Helena

Her. God speed fair Helena! Whither away?
Hel. Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.
Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!
Your eyes are lode-stars; and your tongue's sweet air
More tunable than lark to shepherd's ear,
When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.
Sickness is catching: O, were favour so,
Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go;
My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,
My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.
Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,
The rest I 'd give to be to you translated.
O teach me how you look; and with what art
You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart!
Her. I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.
Hel. O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!
Her. I give him curses, yet he gives me love.
Hel. O that my prayers could such affection move!
Her. The more I hate, the more he follows me.
Hel. The more I love, the more he hateth me.
Her. His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.
Hel. None, but your beauty: would that fault were mine!
Her. Take comfort: he no more shall see my face;
Lysander and myself will fly this place.

Before the time I did Lysander see,
Seem'd Athens as a paradise to me:
O then, what graces in my love do dwell
That he hath turn'd a heaven unto a hell!

Lys. Helen, to you our minds we will unfold:
To-morrow night, when Phœbe doth behold
Her silver visage in the watery glass,
Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass, —
A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal, —
Through Athens' gates have we devis'd to steal.

Her. And in the wood, where often you and I
Upon faint primrose-beds were wont to lie,
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,
There my Lysander and myself shall meet;
And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,
To seek new friends and stranger companies.
Farewell, sweet playfellow: pray thou for us,
And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius! —
Keep word, Lysander: we must starve our sight
From lovers' food till morrow deep midnight.

Lys. I will, my Hermia. [*Exit* HERMIA
Helena, adieu;
As you on him, Demetrius dote on you!
[*Exit* LYSANDER

Hel. How happy some o'er other some can be!
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.
But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;
He will not know what all but he do know:
And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,
So I, admiring of his qualities.

Things base and vile, holding no quantity,
Love can transpose to form and dignity:
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;
And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind:
Nor hath Love's mind of any judgement taste;
Wings, and no eyes, figure unheedy haste:
And therefore is Love said to be a child,
Because in choice he is so oft beguil'd.
As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,
So the boy Love is perjur'd everywhere:
For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,
He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine;
And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,
So he dissolv'd, and showers of oaths did melt.
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight:
Then to the wood will he to-morrow night
Pursue her; and for this intelligence
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense:
But herein mean I to enrich my pain,
To have his sight thither and back again. [*Exit*

Scene II

Athens. Quince's *house*

Enter Snug, Bottom, Flute, Snout, Quince, *and* Starveling

Quin. Is all our company here?

Bot. You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.

Quin. Here is the scroll of every man's name which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the duke and duchess, on his wedding-day at night.

Bot. First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on; then read the names of the actors; and so grow to a point.

Quin. Marry, our play is, The most lamentable Comedy and most cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisby.

Bot. A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. — Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters, spread yourselves.

Quin. Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

Bot. Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

Quin. You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

Bot. What is Pyramus? a lover, or a tyrant?

Quin. A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.

Bot. That will ask some tears in the true performing of it: if I do it, let the audience look to their eyes; I will move storms, I will condole in some measure. To the rest: yet my chief humour is for a tyrant: I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

The raging rocks
And shivering shocks
Shall break the locks
Of prison-gates;
And Phibbus' car
Shall shine from far,
And make and mar
The foolish Fates.

This was lofty! Now name the rest of the players. This is Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein; a lover is more condoling.

Quin. Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

Flu. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. You must take Thisby on you.

Flu. What is Thisby? a wandering knight?

Quin. It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

Flu. Nay, faith, let not me play a woman; I have a beard coming.

Quin. That 's all one: you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

Bot. An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too: I 'll speak in a monstrous little voice, — Thisne, Thisne — 'Ah, Pyramus, my lover dear! thy Thisby dear, and lady dear!'

Quin. No, no; you must play Pyramus: and, Flute, you Thisby.

Bot. Well, proceed.

Quin. Robin Starveling, the tailor.

Star. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother. Tom Snout, the tinker.

Snout. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. You, Pyramus's father; myself, Thisby's father; — Snug, the joiner, you, the lion's part: — and, I hope, here is a play fitted.

Snug. Have you the lion's part written? pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

Quin. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

Bot. Let me play the lion too: I will roar, that I will do any man's heart good to hear me; I will roar, that I will make the duke say, 'Let him roar again, let him roar again.'

Quin. An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all.

All. That would hang us, every mother's son.

Bot. I grant you, friends, if that you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us; but I will aggravate my voice so, that I will roar you as gently as any sucking-dove; I will roar you an 't were any nightingale.

Quin. You can play no part but Pyramus: for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man; a proper man, as one shall see in a summer's day; a most lovely, gentleman-like man: therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

Bot. Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?

Quin. Why, what you will.

Bot. I will discharge it in either your straw-colour

beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French-crown-colour beard, your perfect yellow.

Quin. Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play barefaced. But, masters, here are your parts: and I am to entreat you, request you, and desire you, to con them by to-morrow night; and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight; there will we rehearse, for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogged with company, and our devices known. In the mean time I will draw a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not.

Bot. We will meet; and there we may rehearse more obscenely and courageously. Take pains; be perfect: adieu.

Quin. At the duke's oak we meet.

Bot. Enough; hold or cut bow-strings. [*Exeunt*

ACT II

Scene I

A wood near Athens

Enter, from opposite sides, a Fairy *and* Puck

Puck. How now, spirit! whither wander you?

Fai. Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire,
I do wander every where,
Swifter than the moon's sphere;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be:
In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours:
I must go seek some dew-drops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.
Farewell, thou lob of spirits; I 'll be gone;
Our queen and all our elves come here anon.

Puck. The king doth keep his revels here to-night:
Take heed the queen come not within his sight;
For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,
Because that she, as her attendant, hath

A lovely boy, stolen from an Indian king;
She never had so sweet a changeling:
And jealous Oberon would have the child
Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild;
But she perforce withholds the lovèd boy,
Crowns him with flowers and makes him all her joy:
And now they never meet in grove or green,
By fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen,
But they do square, that all their elves for fear
Creep into acorn-cups and hide them there.
Fai. Either I mistake your shape and making quite
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
Call'd Robin Goodfellow: are you not he
That frights the maidens of the villagery;
Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern,
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;
And sometimes make the drink to bear no barm;
Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?
Those that Hobgoblin call you and sweet Puck,
You do their work, and they shall have good luck:
Are not you he?
Puck. Thou speak'st aright:
I am that merry wanderer of the night.
I jest to Oberon, and make him smile,
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,
Neighing in likeness of a filly foal:
And sometimes lurk I in a gossip's bowl,
In very likeness of a roasted crab;

And when she drinks, against her lips I bob
And on her wither'd dewlap pour the ale.
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me;
Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,
And 'tailor' cries, and falls into a cough;
And then the whole quire hold their hips and laugh
And waxen in their mirth and neeze and swear
A merrier hour was never wasted there.
But, room, fairy! here comes Oberon.

Fai. And here my mistress. — Would that he were gone!

Enter, from one side, OBERON *with his train; from the other,* TITANIA *with hers*

Obe. Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

Tita. What, jealous Oberon? Fairies, skip hence: I have forsworn his bed and company.

Obe. Tarry, rash wanton: am not I thy lord?

Tita. Then I must be thy lady: but I know
When thou hast stol'n away from fairy land,
And in the shape of Corin sat all day,
Playing on pipes of corn and versing love
To amorous Phillida. Why art thou here,
Come from the farthest steppe of India,
But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,
Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior love,
To Theseus must be wedded, and you come
To give their bed joy and prosperity.

Obe. How canst thou thus for shame, Titania,

Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?
Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night
From Perigenia, whom he ravishèd?
And make him with fair Æglé break his faith,
With Ariadne and Antiopa?
Tita. These are the forgeries of jealousy:
And never, since the middle summer's spring,
Met we on hill, in dale, forest, or mead,
By pavèd fountain, or by rushy brook,
Or in the beachèd margent of the sea,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.
Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea
Contagious fogs; which, falling in the land,
Hath every pelting river made so proud,
That they have overborne their continents:
The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,
The ploughman lost his sweat; and the green corn
Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard:
The fold stands empty in the drownèd field,
And crows are fatted with the murrion flock;
The nine men's morris is fill'd up with mud;
And the quaint mazes in the wanton green,
For lack of tread, are undistinguishable;
The human mortals want their winter here;
No night is now with hymn or carol blest:
Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
Pale in her anger, washes all the air,

That rheúmatic diseases do abound:
And thorough this distemperature we see
The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose;
And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown
An odorous chaplet of sweet summer-buds
Is, as in mockery, set: the spring, the summer,
The childing autumn, angry winter, change
Their wonted liveries; and the mazèd world,
By their increase, now knows not which is which:
And this same progeny of evils comes
From our debate, from our dissension;
We are their parents and original.

Obe. Do you amend it, then; it lies in you:
Why should Titania cross her Oberon?
I do but beg a little changeling boy
To be my henchman.

Tita. Set your heart at rest:
The fairy land buys not the child of me.
His mother was a votaress of my order:
And in the spicèd Indian air, by night,
Full often hath she gossip'd by my side,
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
Marking the embarkèd traders on the flood;
Which she with pretty and with swimming gait
Would imitate, and sail upon the land
To fetch me trifles, and return again,
As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.
And for her sake I do rear up her boy;
And for her sake I will not part with him.

Obe. How long within this wood intend you stay?
Tita. Perchance till after Theseus' wedding-day.
If you will patiently dance in our round
And see our moonlight revels, go with us;
If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.
Obe. Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.
Tita. Not for thy fairy kingdom. — Fairies, away!
We shall chide downright if I longer stay.
[*Exit* Titania, *with her train*
Obe. Well, go thy way: thou shalt not from this grove
Till I torment thee for this injury.
My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou rememberest
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres
To hear the sea-maid's music.
Puck. I remember.
Obe. That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took
At a fair vestal thronèd by the west,
And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts:
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
And the imperial votaress passèd on,
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.

Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:
It fell upon a little western flower,
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,
And maidens call it love-in-idleness.
Fetch me that flower; the herb I show'd thee once:
The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid
Will make or man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.
Fetch me this herb; and be thou here again
Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

Puck. I 'll put a girdle round about the earth
In forty minutes. [*Exit* PUCK

Obe. Having once this juice,
I 'll watch Titania when she is asleep,
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.
The next thing then she waking looks upon,
Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,
On meddling monkey, or on busy ape,
She shall pursue it with the soul of love.
And ere I take this charm off from her sight, —
As I can take it with another herb, —
I 'll make her render up her page to me.
But who comes here? I am invisible;
And I will overhear their conference.

Enter DEMETRIUS, HELENA *following him*

Dem. I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.
Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?
The one I 'll slay, the other slayeth me.

Thou told'st me they were stol'n unto this wood;
And here am I, and wood within this wood,
Because I cannot meet my Hermia.
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.
Hel. You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant;
But yet you draw not iron, for my heart
Is true as steel: leave you your power to draw,
And I shall have no power to follow you.
Dem. Do I entice you? Do I speak you fair?
Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth
Tell you I do not nor I cannot love you?
Hel. And even for that do I love you the more.
I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,
The more you beat me, I will fawn on you:
Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,
Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,
Unworthy as I am, to follow you.
What worser place can I beg in your love, —
And yet a place of high respect with me, —
Than to be usèd as you use your dog?
Dem. Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit,
For I am sick when I do look on thee.
Hel. And I am sick when I look not on you.
Dem. You do impeach your modesty too much,
To leave the city and commit yourself
Into the hands of one that loves you not;
To trust the opportunity of night
And the ill counsel of a desert place
With the rich worth of your virginity.

Hel. Your virtue is my privilege: for that
It is not night when I do see your face,
Therefore I think I am not in the night,
Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company,
For you in my respect are all the world:
Then how can it be said I am alone,
When all the world is here to look on me?
Dem. I 'll run from thee, and hide me in the brakes,
And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.
Hel. The wildest hath not such a heart as you.
Run when you will, the story shall be chang'd:
Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase;
The dove pursues the griffin; the mild hind
Makes speed to catch the tiger, — bootless speed,
When cowardice pursues and valour flies!
Dem. I will not stay thy questions; let me go:
Or, if thou follow me, do not believe
But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.
Hel. Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,
You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius!
Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex:
We cannot fight for love, as men may do;
We should be woo'd, and were not made to woo,
[*Exit* DEMETRIUS
I 'll follow thee, and make a heaven of hell,
To die upon the hand I love so well. [*Exit*
Obe. Fare thee well, nymph: ere he do leave this grove,
Thou shalt fly him, and he shall seek thy love. —

Re-enter Puck

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

Puck. Ay, there it is.

Obe. I pray thee, give it me.

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows;
Quite over-canopied with lush woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine:
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight;
And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in:
And with the juice of this I 'll streak her eyes,
And make her full of hateful fantasies.
Take thou some of it and seek through this grove:
A sweet Athenian lady is in love
With a disdainful youth: anoint his eyes;
But do it when the next thing he espies
May be the lady: thou shalt know the man
By the Athenian garments he hath on.
Effect it with some care that he may prove
More fond on her than she upon her love:
And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

Puck. Fear not, my lord, your servant shall do so.

[*Exeunt*

SCENE II

Another part of the wood

Enter TITANIA *with her train*

Tita. Come, now a roundel and a fairy song;
Then, for the third part of a minute, hence;
Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds,
Some war with rere-mice for their leathern wings
To make my small elves coats; and some keep back
The clamorous owl that nightly hoots and wonders
At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep;
Then to your offices, and let me rest.

SONG

I

1 *Fairy.* You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
Newts and blindworms, do no wrong,
Come not near our fairy queen.

CHORUS

Philomel, with melody
Sing in our sweet lullaby;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby:
Never harm nor spell nor charm
Come our lovely lady nigh;
So good-night, with lullaby!

II

2 *Fairy.* Weaving spiders, come not here;
Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence;
Beetles black, approach not near;
Worm nor snail, do no offence.

CHORUS

Philomel, with melody &c.

1 *Fairy.* Hence, away! now all is well:
One aloof stand sentinel.
[*Exeunt* Fairies. Titania *sleeps*

Enter Oberon

Obe. What thou seest when thou dost wake,
[*Squeezes the flower on* Titania's *eyelids*
Do it for thy true-love take;
Love and languish for his sake:
Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,
Pard, or boar with bristled hair,
In thy eye that shall appear
When thou wak'st, it is thy dear:
Wake when some vile thing is near. [*Exit*

Enter Lysander *and* Hermia

Lys. Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood:
And, to speak troth, I have forgot our way:
We 'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,
And tarry for the comfort of the day.
Her. Be 't so, Lysander: find you out a bed;
For I upon this bank will rest my head.
Lys. One turf shall serve as pillow for us both;
One heart, one bed, two bosoms, and one troth.
Her. Nay, good Lysander; for my sake, my dear,
Lie further off yet, do not lie so near.
Lys. O, take the sense, sweet, of my innocence!
Love takes the meaning in love's conference.

Obe. "In thy eye that shall appear
When thou wak'st, it is thy dear."

I mean that my heart unto yours is knit
So that but one heart we can make of it;
Two bosoms interchainèd with an oath;
So then two bosoms and a single troth.
Then by your side no bed-room me deny;
For, lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.
Her. Lysander riddles very prettily:
Now much beshrew my manners and my pride,
If Hermia meant to say Lysander lied.
But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy
Lie further off; in human modesty,
Such separation as may well be said
Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid,
So far be distant: and, good night, sweet friend:
Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end!
Lys. Amen, amen, to that fair prayer, say I;
And then end life when I end loyalty!
Here is my bed: sleep give thee all his rest!
Her. With half that wish the wisher's eyes be press'd! [*They sleep*

Enter PUCK

Puck. Through the forest have I gone,
But Athenian found I none
On whose eyes I might approve
This flower's force in stirring love.
Night and silence. — Who is here?
Weeds of Athens he doth wear:
This is he my master said
Despisèd the Athenian maid;

And here the maiden, sleeping sound,
On the dank and dirty ground.
Pretty soul! she durst not lie
Near this lack-love, this kill-courtesy.
Churl, upon thy eyes I throw
All the power this charm doth owe.
[*Squeezes the flower on* LYSANDER'S *eyelids*
When thou wak'st, let love forbid
Sleep his seat on thy eyelid:
So awake when I am gone,
For I must now to Oberon. [*Exit*

Enter DEMETRIUS *and* HELENA, *running*

Hel. Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

Dem. I charge thee, hence, and do not haunt me thus.

Hel. O, wilt thou darkling leave me? do not so.

Dem. Stay, on thy peril: I alone will go. [*Exit*

Hel. O, I am out of breath in this fond chase!
The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.
Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies;
For she hath blessèd and attractive eyes.
How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears:
If so, my eyes are oftener wash'd than hers.
No, no, I am as ugly as a bear;
For beasts that meet me run away for fear:
Therefore no marvel though Demetrius
Do, as a monster, fly my presence thus.

What wicked and dissembling glass of mine
Made me compare with Hermia's sphery eyne?
But who is here? Lysander! on the ground!
Dead? or asleep? I see no blood, no wound.
Lysander, if you live, good sir, awake.
Lys. [*Awaking*] And run through fire I will, for thy sweet sake.
Transparent Helena! Nature shows art,
That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.
Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a word
Is that vile name to perish on my sword!
Hel. Do not say so, Lysander; say not so.
What though he love your Hermia? Lord, what though?
Yet Hermia still loves you: then be content.
Lys. Content with Hermia! No; I do repent
The tedious minutes I with her have spent.
Not Hermia but Helena I love:
Who will not change a raven for a dove?
The will of man is by his reason sway'd;
And reason says you are the worthier maid.
Things growing are not ripe until their season:
So I, being young, till now ripe not to reason;
And touching now the point of human skill,
Reason becomes the marshal to my will,
And leads me to your eyes, where I o'erlook
Love's stories written in love's richest book.
Hel. Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born?
When at your hands did I deserve this scorn?

Is 't not enough, is 't not enough, young man,
That I did never, no, nor never can,
Deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye,
But you must flout my insufficiency?
Good troth, you do me wrong, good sooth, you do,
In such disdainful manner me to woo.
But fare you well: perforce I must confess
I thought you lord of more true gentleness.
O, that a lady, of one man refus'd,
Should of another therefore be abus'd! [*Exit*

Lys. She sees not Hermia. — Hermia, sleep thou there:
And never may'st thou come Lysander near!
For as a surfeit of the sweetest things
The deepest loathing to the stomach brings,
Or as the heresies that men do leave
Are hated most of those they did deceive,
So thou, my surfeit and my heresy,
Of all be hated, but the most of me!
And, all my powers, address your love and might
To honour Helen and to be her knight!

Her. [*Awaking*] Help me, Lysander, help me! do thy best
To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast!
Ah me, for pity! — what a dream was here!
Lysander, look how I do quake with fear:
Methought a serpent eat my heart away,
And you sat smiling at his cruel prey.
Lysander! what, remov'd? Lysander! lord! —

What, out of hearing? gone? no sound, no word?
Alack, where are you? speak, an if you hear;
Speak, of all loves! I swoon almost with fear.
No? then I well perceive you are not nigh:
Either death or you I 'll find immediately. [*Exit*

ACT III

Scene I

The wood. Titania *lying asleep*

Enter Quince, Snug, Bottom, Flute, Snout, *and* Starveling

Bot. Are we all met?

Quin. Pat, pat; and here 's a marvellous convenient place for our rehearsal. This green-plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn-brake our 'tiring-house; and we will do it in action as we will do it before the duke.

Bot. Peter Quince, —

Quin. What say'st thou, bully Bottom?

Bot. There are things in this comedy of Pyramus and Thisby that will never please. First, Pyramus must draw a sword to kill himself; which the ladies cannot abide. How answer you that?

Snout. By 'r lakin, a parlous fear.

Star. I believe we must leave the killing out, when all is done.

Bot. Not a whit: I have a device to make all well. Write me a prologue; and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords and that Pyramus is not killed indeed; and, for the more better assurance, tell them that I Pyramus am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver: this will put them out of fear.

Quin. Well, we will have such a prologue; and it shall be written in eight and six.

Bot. No, make it two more; let it be written in eight and eight.

Snout. Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

Star. I fear it, I promise you.

Bot. Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves: to bring in — God shield us! — a lion among ladies, is a most dreadful thing; for there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living; and we ought to look to it.

Snout. Therefore another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

Bot. Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck; and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect, — 'Ladies,' — or, 'Fair ladies, — I would wish you,' — or, 'I would request you,' — or, 'I would entreat you, — not to fear, not to tremble: my life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life: no, I am no such thing; I am a man as other men are:' — and there indeed let him name his name, and tell them plainly, he is Snug the joiner.

Quin. Well, it shall be so. But there is two hard things, that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber; for, you know, Pyramus and Thisby meet by moonlight.

Snug. Doth the moon shine that night we play our play?

Bot. A calendar, a calendar! look in the almanac; find out moonshine, find out moonshine.

Quin. Yes, it doth shine that night.

Bot. Why, then you may leave a casement of the great chamber-window, where we play, open; and the moon may shine in at the casement.

Quin. Ay; or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lantern, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of Moonshine. Then there is another thing: we must have a wall in the great chamber; for Pyramus and Thisby, says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

Snug. You never can bring in a wall. — What say you, Bottom?

Bot. Some man or other must present Wall; and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-cast about him, to signify wall; and let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper.

Quin. If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus, you begin: when you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake; and so every one according to his cue.

Enter Puck *behind*

Puck. What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here,
So near the cradle of the fairy queen?

What, a play toward! I 'll be an auditor;
An actor too perhaps, if I see cause.

Quin. Speak, Pyramus. — Thisby, stand forth.

Pyr. Thisby, the flowers of odious savours sweet, —

Quin. Odours, odours.

Pyr. —— odours savours sweet:
So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisby dear. —
But hark, a voice! stay thou but here awhile,
And by and by I will to thee appear. [*Exit*

Puck. A stranger Pyramus than e'er played here!
[*Aside, and exit*

This. Must I speak now?

Quin. Ay, marry, must you; for you must understand he goes but to see a noise that he heard, and is to come again.

This. Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,
Of colour like the red rose on triumphant brier,
Most briskly juvenal, and eke most lovely Jew,
As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire,
I 'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.

Quin. Ninus' tomb, man: why, you must not speak that yet; that you answer to Pyramus: you speak all your part at once, cues and all. — Pyramus, enter; your cue is past; it is, 'never tire.'

This. O, — As true as truest horse that yet would never tire.

Pyr. If I were fair, Thisby, I were only thine: —

Re-enter PUCK *and* BOTTOM *with an ass's head*

Quin. O monstrous! O strange! we are haunted.
Pray, masters! fly, masters! Help!
[*Exeunt all the* Clowns

Puck. I 'll follow you, I 'll lead you about a round,
Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier;
Sometime a horse I 'll be, sometime a hound,
A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire;
And neigh and bark and grunt and roar and burn,
Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn.
[*Exit*

Bot. Why do they run away? this is knavery of them to make me afeard.

Re-enter Snout

Snout. O Bottom, thou art changed! what do I see on thee?

Bot. What do you see? you see an ass-head of your own, do you? [*Exit* Snout

Re-enter Quince

Quin. Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated. [*Exit*

Bot. I see their knavery: this is to make an ass of me; to fright me, if they could. But I will not stir from this place, do what they can: I will walk up and down here, and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid. [*Sings*

The ousel-cock, so black of hue,
With orange-tawny bill,
The throstle with his note so true,
The wren with little quill, —

Tita. [*Awaking*] What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

Bot. [*Sings*] The finch, the sparrow, and the lark,
The plain-song cuckoo gray,
Whose note full many a man doth mark,
And dares not answer nay; —

for indeed who would set his wit to so foolish a bird? who would give a bird the lie, though he cry, 'Cuckoo,' never so?

Tita. I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:
Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note;
So is mine eye enthrallèd to thy shape;
And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me
On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee.

Bot. Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that: and yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together now-a-days; — the more the pity, that some honest neighbours will not make them friends. Nay, I can gleek upon occasion.

Tita. Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

Bot. Not so, neither: but, if I had wit enough to get out of this wood, I have enough to serve mine own turn.

Tita. Out of this wood do not desire to go:
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.
I am a spirit of no common rate:
The summer still doth tend upon my state,
And I do love thee: therefore, go with me;
I 'll give thee fairies to attend on thee;
And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,
And sing, while thou on pressèd flowers dost sleep:

And I will purge thy mortal grossness so,
That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.
Peaseblossom! Cobweb! Moth! and Mustardseed!

Enter the four Fairies

Peas. Ready.
Cob. And I.
Moth. And I.
Mus. And I.
All. Where shall we go?

Tita. Be kind and courteous to this gentleman;
Hop in his walks, and gambol in his eyes;
Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries;
The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,
And for night-tapers crop their waxen thighs,
And light them at the fiery glowworm's eyes,
To have my love to bed and to arise;
And pluck the wings from painted butterflies
To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes:
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

Peas. Hail, mortal!
Cob. Hail!
Moth. Hail!
Mus. Hail!

Bot. I cry your worships' mercy, heartily. — I beseech your worship's name.

Cob. Cobweb.

Bot. I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good Master Cobweb: if I cut my finger, I shall

make bold with you. — Your name, honest gentleman?

Peas. Peaseblossom.

Bot. I pray you, commend me to Mistress Squash, your mother, and to Master Peascod, your father. Good Master Peaseblossom, I shall desire you of more acquaintance too. — Your name, I beseech you, sir?

Mus. Mustardseed.

Bot. Good Master Mustardseed, I know your patience well: that same cowardly, giant-like ox-beef hath devoured many a gentleman of your house: I promise you your kindred hath made my eyes water ere now. I desire your more acquaintance, good Master Mustardseed.

Tita. Come, wait upon him; lead him to my bower.
The moon methinks looks with a watery eye;
And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,
Lamenting some enforcèd chastity.
Tie up my love's tongue, bring him silently.

[*Exeunt*

SCENE II

Another part of the wood

Enter OBERON

Obe. I wonder if Titania be awak'd;
Then, what it was that next came in her eye,
Which she must dote on in extremity.
Here comes my messenger.

Enter Puck

How now, mad spirit!
What night-rule now about this haunted grove?

Puck. My mistress with a monster is in love.
Near to her close and consecrated bower,
While she was in her dull and sleeping hour,
A crew of patches, rude mechanicals,
That work for bread upon Athenian stalls,
Were met together to rehearse a play,
Intended for great Theseus' nuptial-day.
The shallowest thick-skin of that barren sort,
Who Pyramus presented, in their sport
Forsook his scene and enter'd in a brake:
When I did him at this advantage take,
An ass's nole I fixèd on his head.
Anon his Thisbe must be answerèd,
And forth my mimic comes. When they him spy,
As wild geese that the creeping fowler eye,
Or russet-pated choughs, many in sort,
Rising and cawing at the gun's report,
Sever themselves and madly sweep the sky;
So, at his sight, away his fellows fly;
And, at our stamp, here o'er and o'er one falls;
He murder cries and help from Athens calls.
Their sense thus weak, lost with their fears thus strong,
Made senseless things begin to do them wrong;
For briers and thorns at their apparel snatch, —
Some sleeves, — some, hats; — from yielders all things catch.

I led them on in this distracted fear,
And left sweet Pyramus translated there:
When in that moment (so it came to pass)
Titania wak'd, and straightway lov'd an ass.
Obe. This falls out better than I could devise.
But hast thou yet latch'd the Athenian's eyes
With the love-juice, as I did bid thee do?
Puck. I took him sleeping — that is finish'd too —
And the Athenian woman by his side;
That, when he wak'd, of force she must be ey'd.

Enter Demetrius *and* Hermia.

Obe. Stand close; this is the same Athenian.
Puck. This is the woman, but not this the man.
Dem. O, why rebuke you him that loves you so?
Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe.
Her. Now I but chide; but I should use thee worse,
For thou, I fear, hast given me cause to curse.
If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep,
Being o'er shoes in blood, plunge in the deep,
And kill me too.
The sun was not so true unto the day
As he to me: would he have stol'n away
From sleeping Hermia? I 'll believe as soon
This whole earth may be bor'd; and that the moon
May through the centre creep, and so displease
Her brother's noontide with th' Antipodes.
It cannot be but thou hast murder'd him;
So should a murderer look, — so dead, so grim.

Dem. So should the murder'd look; and so should I,
Pierc'd through the heart with your stern cruelty:
Yet you, the murderer, look as bright, as clear,
As yonder Venus in her glimmering sphere.
Her. What 's this to my Lysander? where is he?
Ah, good Demetrius, wilt thou give him me?
Dem. I 'd rather give his carcass to my hounds.
Her. Out, dog! out, cur! thou driv'st me past the bounds
Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him then?
Henceforth be never number'd among men!
O, once tell true, tell true, even for my sake!
Durst thou have look'd upon him being awake,
And hast thou kill'd him sleeping? O brave touch!
Could not a worm, an adder, do so much?
And adder did it; for with doubler tongue
Than thine, thou serpent, never adder stung.
Dem. You spend your passion on a mispris'd mood:
I am not guilty of Lysander's blood;
Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.
Her. I pray thee, tell me then that he is well.
Dem. An if I could, what should I get therefor?
Her. A privilege, never to see me more.
And from thy hated presence part I so:
See me no more, whether he be dead or no. [*Exit*
Dem. There is no following her in this fierce vein:
Here therefore for a while I will remain.
So sorrow's heaviness doth heavier grow

For debt that bankrupt sleep doth sorrow owe;
Which now in some slight measure it will pay,
If for his tender here I make some stay.
[*Lies down and sleeps*
Obe. What hast thou done? thou hast mistaken quite,
And laid the love-juice on some true-love's sight:
Of thy misprision must perforce ensue
Some true love turn'd, and not a false turn'd true.
Puck. Then fate o'errules; that, one man holding troth,
A million fail, confounding oath on oath.
Obe. About the wood go swifter than the wind,
And Helena of Athens look thou find:
All fancy-sick she is, and pale of cheer,
With sighs of love, that costs the fresh blood dear:
By some illusion see thou bring her here:
I 'll charm his eyes against she do appear.
Puck. I go, I go; look how I go,
Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow. [*Exit*
Obe. Flower of this purple dye,
Hit with Cupid's archery,
[*Squeezes the flower on* Demetrius' *eyelids*
Sink in apple of his eye.
When his love he doth espy,
Let her shine as gloriously
As the Venus of the sky.
When thou wak'st, if she be by,
Beg of her for remedy.

Re-enter Puck

Puck. Captain of our fairy band,
Helena is here at hand;
And the youth, mistook by me,
Pleading for a lover's fee.
Shall we their fond pageant see?
Lord, what fools these mortals be!

Obe. Stand aside: the noise they make
Will cause Demetrius to awake.

Puck. Then will two at once woo one:
That must needs be sport alone;
And those things do best please me
That befall preposterously.

Re-enter Lysander *and* Helena

Lys. Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?
Scorn and derision never come in tears:
Look, when I vow, I weep; and vows so born,
In their nativity all truth appears.
How can these things in me seem scorn to you,
Bearing the badge of faith to prove them true?

Hel. You do advance your cunning more and more.
When truth kills truth, O devilish-holy fray!
These vows are Hermia's: will you give her o'er?
Weigh oath with oath, and you will nothing weigh:
Your vows to her and me, put in two scales,
Will even weigh; and both as light as tales.

Lys. I had no judgement when to her I swore.
Hel. Nor none, in my mind, now you give her o'er.
Lys. Demetrius loves her, and he loves not you.
Dem. [*awaking*] O Helen, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!
To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?
Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show
Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow!
That pure congealèd white, high Taurus' snow,
Fann'd with the eastern wind, turns to a crow,
When thou hold'st up thy hand: O let me kiss
This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss!
Hel. O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent
To set against me for your merriment:
If you were civil and knew courtesy,
You would not do me thus much injury.
Can you not hate me, as I know you do,
But you must join in souls to mock me too?
If you were men, as men you are in show,
You would not use a gentle lady so;
To vow, and swear, and superpraise my parts,
When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.
You both are rivals and love Hermia;
And now both rivals, to mock Helena:
A trim exploit, a manly enterprise,
To conjure tears up in a poor maid's eyes
With your derision! none of noble sort
Would so offend a virgin, and extort
A poor soul's patience, all to make you sport.
Lys. You are unkind, Demetrius; be not so;

For you love Hermia; this you know I know:
And here, with all good-will, with all my heart,
In Hermia's love I yield you up my part;
And yours of Helena to me bequeath,
Whom I do love and will do to my death.

Hel. Never did mockers waste more idle breath.

Dem. Lysander, keep thy Hermia; I will none:
If e'er I lov'd her, all that love is gone.
My heart to her but as guest-wise sojourn'd,
And now to Helen is it home return'd,
There to remain.

Lys. Helen, it is not so.

Dem. Disparage not the faith thou dost not know,
Lest, to thy peril, thou aby it dear.
Look where thy love comes; yonder is thy dear.

Re-enter Hermia

Her. Dark night, that from the eye his function takes,
The ear more quick of apprehension makes;
Wherein it doth impair the seeing sense,
It pays the hearing double recompense.
Thou art not by mine eye, Lysander, found;
Mine ear, I thank it, brought me to thy sound.
But why unkindly didst thou leave me so?

Lys. Why should he stay, whom love doth press to go?

Her. What love could press Lysander from my side?

Lys. Lysander's love, that would not let him bide, —

Fair Helena, who more engilds the night
Than all yon fiery oes and eyes of light.
Why seek'st thou me? could not this make thee know
The hate I bare thee made me leave thee so?
Her. You speak not as you think: it cannot be.
Hel. Lo, she is one of this confederacy!
Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three
To fashion this false sport in spite of me.
Injurious Hermia! most ungrateful maid!
Have you conspir'd, have you with these contriv'd
To bait me with this foul derision?
Is all the counsel that we two have shar'd,
The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us, — O, is all forgot?
All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence?
We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
Have with our needles created both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
Both warbling of one song, both in one key;
As if our hands, our sides, voices, and minds
Had been incorp'rate. So we grew together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted;
But yet a union in partition;
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem;
So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart;
Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,
Due but to one, and crownèd with one crest.
And will you rent our ancient love asunder,
To join with men in scorning your poor friend?

It is not friendly, 't is not maidenly:
Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for 't,
Though I alone do feel the injury.
Her. I am amazèd at your passionate words.
I scorn you not: it seems that you scorn me.
Hel. Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn,
To follow me and praise my eyes and face?
And made your other love, Demetrius,
Who even but now did spurn me with his foot,
To call me goddess, nymph, divine, and rare,
Precious, celestial? Wherefore speaks he this
To her he hates? and wherefore doth Lysander
Deny your love, so rich within his soul,
And tender me, forsooth, affection,
But by your setting on, by your consent?
What though I be not so in grace as you,
So hung upon with love, so fortunate;
But miserable most to love unlov'd?
This you should pity rather than despise.
Her. I understand not what you mean by this.
Hel. Ay, do, persèver, counterfeit sad looks,
Make mouths upon me when I turn my back;
Wink at each other; hold the sweet jest up:
This sport, well carried, shall be chronicled.
If you have any pity, grace, or manners,
You would not make me such an argument.
But fare ye well: 't is partly mine own fault;
Which death or absence soon shall remedy.
Lys. Stay, gentle Helena; hear my excuse:
My love, my life, my soul, fair **Helena!**

Hel. O excellent!
Her. Sweet, do not scorn her so.
Dem. If she cannot entreat, I can compel.
Lys. Thou canst compel no more than she entreat:
Thy threats have no more strength than her weak prayers.
Helen, I love thee; by my life I do:
I swear by that which I will lose for thee,
To prove him false that says I love thee not.
Dem. I say I love thee more than he can do.
Lys. If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too.
Dem. Quick, come!
Her. Lysander, whereto tends all this?
Lys. Away, you Ethiop!
Dem. No, no, sir: — seem to break loose;
Take on as you would follow,
But yet come not: You are a tame man, go!
Lys. Hang off, thou cat, thou burr! vile thing, let loose;
Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent!
Her. Why are you grown so rude? what change is this,
Sweet love?
Lys. Thy love! out, tawny Tartar, out!
Out, loathèd medicine! O hated potion, hence!
Her. Do you not jest?
Hel. Yes, sooth; and so do you.
Lys. Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.
Dem. I would I had your bond, for I perceive
A weak bond holds you: I 'll not trust your word.

Lys. What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead?
Although I hate her, I 'll not harm her so.
Her. What, can you do me greater harm than hate?
Hate me! wherefore? O me! what news, my love?
Am not I Hermia? Are not you Lysander?
I am as fair now as I was erewhile.
Since night you lov'd me; yet since night you left me:
Why, then you left me, — O, the gods forbid! —
In earnest, shall I say?
Lys. Ay, by my life;
And never did desire to see thee more.
Therefore be out of hope, of question, of doubt;
Be certain, nothing truer; 't is no jest
That I do hate thee and love Helena.
Her. O me! you juggler; you canker-blossom!
You thief of love! what, have you come by night
And stol'n my love's heart from him?
Hel. Fine, i' faith!
Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,
No touch of bashfulness? What, will you tear
Impatient answers from my gentle tongue?
Fie, fie! you counterfeit, you puppet, you!
Her. Puppet! why so? ay, that way goes the game.
Now I perceive that she hath made compare
Between our statures; she hath urg'd her height;
And with her personage, her tall personage,
Her height, forsooth, she hath prevail'd with him. —

And are you grown so high in his esteem,
Because I am so dwarfish and so low?
How low am I, thou painted maypole? speak;
How low am I? I am not yet so low
But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

Hel. I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,
Let her not hurt me: I was never curst;
I have no gift at all in shrewishness;
I am a right maid for my cowardice:
Let her not strike me. You perhaps may think,
Because she 's something lower than myself,
That I can match her.

Her. Lower! hark, again.

Hel. Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.
I evermore did love you, Hermia,
Did ever keep your counsels, never wrong'd you;
Save that, in love unto Demetrius,
I told him of your stealth unto this wood:
He follow'd you; for love I follow'd him;
But he hath chid me hence, and threaten'd me
To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too:
And now, so you will let me quiet go,
To Athens will I bear my folly back,
And follow you no further: let me go:
You see how simple and how fond I am.

Her. Why, get you gone: who is 't that hinders you?

Hel. A foolish heart, that I leave here behind.

Her. What, with Lysander?

Hel. With Demetrius.

Lys. Be not afraid; she shall not harm thee, Helena.

Dem. No, sir, she shall not, though you take her part.

Hel. O, when she 's angry, she is keen and shrewd!
She was a vixen when she went to school;
And though she be but little, she is fierce.

Her. Little again! nothing but low and little!
Why will you suffer her to flout me thus?
Let me come to her.

Lys. Get you gone, you dwarf;
You minimus, of hindering knot-grass made;
You bead, you acorn!

Dem. You are too officious
In her behalf that scorns your services.
Let her alone: speak not of Helena;
Take not her part; for, if thou dost intend
Never so little show of love to her,
Thou shalt aby it.

Lys. Now she holds me not;
Now follow, if thou dar'st, to try whose right,
Of thine or mine, is most in Helena.

Dem. Follow! nay, I 'll go with thee, cheek by jole. [*Exeunt* Lysander *and* Demetrius

Her. You, mistress, all this coil is 'long of you:
Nay, go not back.

Hel. I will not trust you, I,
Nor longer stay in your curst company.
Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray;
My legs are longer, though, to run away. [*Exit*

Her. I am amaz'd, and know not what to say.
[*Exit*

Obe. This is thy negligence: still thou mistak'st,
Or else commit'st thy knaveries wilfully.

Puck. Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.
Did not you tell me I should know the man
By the Athenian garments he had on?
And so far blameless proves my enterprise,
That I have 'nointed an Athenian's eyes;
And so far am I glad it so did sort,
As this their jangling I esteem a sport.

Obe. Thou seest these lovers seek a place to fight:
Hie therefore, Robin, overcast the night;
The starry welkin cover thou anon
With drooping fog as black as Acheron;
And lead these testy rivals so astray
As one come not within another's way.
Like to Lysander sometime frame thy tongue,
Then stir Demetrius up with bitter wrong;
And sometime rail thou like Demetrius;
And from each other look thou lead them thus,
Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep
With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep:
Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye;
Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,
To take from thence all error with his might,
And make his eyeballs roll with wonted sight.
When they next wake, all this derision
Shall seem a dream and fruitless vision;
And back to Athens shall the lovers wend,

With league whose date till death shall never end.
Whiles I in this affair do thee employ,
I 'll to my queen and beg her Indian boy;
And then I will her charmèd eye release
From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

Puck. My fairy lord, this must be done with haste,
For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,
And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger;
At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,
Troop home to churchyards: damnèd spirits all,
That in crossways and floods have burial,
Already to their wormy beds are gone;
For fear lest day should look their shames upon,
They wilfully themselves exile from light,
And must for aye consort with black-brow'd night.

Obe. But we are spirits of another sort:
I with the Morning's love have oft made sport;
And, like a forester, the groves may tread,
Even till the eastern gate, all fiery-red,
Opening on Neptune with fair blessèd beams,
Turns into yellow gold his salt green streams.
But, notwithstanding, haste; make no delay:
We may effect this business yet ere day.

[*Exit* OBERON

Puck. Up and down, up and down,
I will lead them up and down:
I am fear'd in field and town:
Goblin, lead them up and down.
Here comes one.

Re-enter LYSANDER

Lys. Where art thou, proud Demetrius? speak thou now.

Puck. Here, villain; drawn and ready. Where art thou?

Lys. I will be with thee straight.

Puck. Follow me then
To plainer ground.

[*Exit* LYSANDER *as following the voice*

Re-enter DEMETRIUS

Dem. Lysander! speak again:
Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled?
Speak! In some bush? Where dost thou hide thy head?

Puck. Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,
Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars,
And wilt not come? Come, recreant; come, thou child;
I 'll whip thee with a rod: he is defil'd
That draws a sword on thee.

Dem. Yea, art thou there?

Puck. Follow my voice: we 'll try no manhood here.

[*Exeunt*

Re-enter LYSANDER

Lys. He goes before me, and still dares me on:
When I come where he calls, then he is gone.
The villain is much lighter-heel'd than I:
I follow'd fast, but faster he did fly;

That fallen am I in dark uneven way,
And here will rest me. Come, thou gentle day!
[*Lies down*
For if but once thou show me thy gray light,
I 'll find Demetrius and revenge this spite. [*Sleeps*

Re-enter Puck *and* Demetrius

Puck. Ho, ho, ho! Coward, why com'st thou not?

Dem. Abide me, if thou dar'st; for well I wot
Thou runn'st before me, shifting every place,
And dar'st not stand, nor look me in the face.
Where art thou now?

Puck. Come hither: I am here.

Dem. Nay, then, thou mock'st me. Thou shalt buy this dear,
If ever I thy face by daylight see:
Now, go thy way. Faintness constraineth me
To measure out my length on this cold bed.
By day's approach look to be visited.
[*Lies down and sleeps*

Re-enter Helena

Hel. O weary night, O long and tedious night,
Abate thy hours! Shine comforts from the east,
That I may back to Athens by daylight,
From these that my poor company detest:
And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye,
Steal me a while from mine own company.
[*Lies down and sleeps*

Puck. Yet but three? Come one more;
Two of both kinds make up four.
Here she comes, curst and sad:
Cupid is a knavish lad
Thus to make poor females mad.

Re-enter HERMIA

Her. Never so weary, never so in woe;
Bedabbled with the dew, and torn with briers;
I can no further crawl, no further go;
My legs can keep no pace with my desires.
Here will I rest me till the break of day.
Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray!
[*Lies down and sleeps*

Puck. On the ground
Sleep sound:
I 'll apply
To your eye,
Gentle lover, remedy.
[*Squeezing the herb on* LYSANDER'S *eyes*
When thou wak'st,
Thou tak'st
True delight
In the sight
Of thy former lady's eye:
And the country proverb known,
That every man should take his own,
In your waking shall be shown:

Jack shall have Jill;
Nought shall go ill;
The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well. [*Exit*

ACT IV

Scene I

The wood. Lysander, Demetrius, Helena, *and* Hermia *lying asleep*

Enter Titania *and* Bottom, Fairies *attending;* Oberon *behind, unseen*

Tita. Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,
And stick musk-roses in thy sleek, smooth head,
And kiss thy fair, large ears, my gentle joy.

Bot. Where 's Peaseblossom?

Peas. Ready.

Bot. Scratch my head, Peaseblossom. — Where 's Monsieur Cobweb?

Cob. Ready.

Bot. Monsieur Cobweb, good monsieur, get your weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hipped bumble-bee on the top of a thistle; and, good monsieur, bring me the honey-bag. Do not fret yourself too much in the action, monsieur; and, good monsieur, have a care the honey-bag break not; I would be loth to have you overflown with a honey-bag, signior. — Where 's Monsieur Mustard-seed?

Must. Ready.

Bot. Give me your neaf, Monsieur Mustardseed. Pray you leave your courtesy, good monsieur.

Must. What 's your will?

Bot. Nothing, good monsieur, but to help Cavalery Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's, monsieur; for methinks I am marvelous hairy about the face; and I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me, I must scratch.

Tita. What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love?

Bot. I have a reasonable good ear in music: let us have the tongs and the bones.

Tita. Or say, sweet love, what thou desir'st to eat.

Bot. Truly, a peck of provender: I could munch your good dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle of hay: good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow.

Tita. I have a venturous fairy that shall seek
The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee new nuts.

Bot. I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas. But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me: I have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

Tita. Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.
Fairies, be gone, and be all ways away.

[*Exeunt* Fairies

So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle
Gently entwist; the female ivy so

Enrings the barky fingers of the elm.
O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee! [*They sleep*

OBERON *advances. Enter* PUCK

Obe. Welcome, good Robin. Seest thou this sweet sight?
Her dotage now I do begin to pity:
For, meeting her of late behind the wood,
Seeking sweet favours for this hateful fool,
I did upbraid her, and fall out with her;
For she his hairy temples then had rounded
With coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers;
And that same dew, which sometime on the buds
Was wont to swell like round and orient pearls,
Stood now within the pretty flowerets' eyes,
Like tears that did their own disgrace bewail.
When I had at my pleasure taunted her,
And she in mild terms begg'd my patience,
I then did ask of her her changeling child;
Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent
To bear him to my bower in fairy land.
And now I have the boy, I will undo
This hateful imperfection of her eyes:
And, gentle Puck, take this transformèd scalp
From off the head of this Athenian swain;
That, he awaking when the other do,
May all to Athens back again repair,
And think no more of this night's accidents,
But as the fierce vexation of a dream.
But first I will release the fairy queen.

Be as thou wast wont to be;
[*Touching her eyes with an herb*
See as thou wast wont to see:
Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower
Hath such force and blessèd power.

Now, my Titania; wake you, my sweet queen.

Tita. My Oberon! what visions have I seen!
Methought I was enamour'd of an ass.

Obe. There lies your love.

Tita. How came these things to pass?
O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now!

Obe. Silence a while. Robin, take off this head.
Titania, music call; and strike more dead
Than common sleep of all these five the sense.

Tita. Music, ho! music, such as charmeth sleep!

Puck. Now, when thou wak'st, with thine own fool's eyes peep.

Obe. Sound, music. [*Still music*] — Come, my queen, take hands with me,
And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.
Now thou and I are new in amity,
And will to-morrow midnight solemnly
Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly
And bless it to all fair posterity:
There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be
Wedded, with Theseus, all in jollity.

Puck. Fairy king, attend and mark:
I do hear the morning lark.

Obe. Then, my queen, in silence sad,
Trip we after the night's shade:

We the globe can compass soon,
Swifter than the wand'ring moon.

Tita. Come, my lord; and in our flight
Tell me how it came this night
That I sleeping here was found
With these mortals on the ground.

[*Exeunt.* *Horns winded within*

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, *and train*

The. Go, one of you, find out the forester;
For now our observation is perform'd;
And since we have the vaward of the day,
My love shall hear the music of my hounds:
Uncouple in the western valley; let them go:
Despatch, I say, and find the forester. —

[*Exit an* Attendant

We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top,
And mark the musical confusion
Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

Hip. I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear
With hounds of Sparta: never did I hear
Such gallant chiding: for, besides the groves,
The skies, the fountains, every region near
Seem'd all one mutual cry: I never heard
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

The. My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
So flew'd, so sanded; and their heads are hung
With ears that sweep away the morning dew;
Crook-knee'd, and dew-lapp'd like Thessalian bulls:

Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,
Each under each. A cry more tunable
Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn,
In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly:
Judge, when you hear. — But, soft! what nymphs are these?

Ege. My lord, this is my daughter here asleep;
And this, Lysander; this Demetrius is;
This Helena, old Nedar's Helena:
I wonder of their being here together.

The. No doubt they rose up early to observe
The rite of May; and, hearing our intent,
Came here in grace of our solemnity. —
But speak, Egeus; is not this the day
That Hermia should give answer of her choice?

Ege. It is, my lord.

The. Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns. [*Exit* Attendant

Horns and shout within. DEMETRIUS, LYSANDER, HERMIA, *and* HELENA *wake and start up*

The. Good-morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past:
Begin these wood-birds but to couple now?

Lys. Pardon, my lord.

[*He and the rest kneel to* THESEUS

The. I pray you all, stand up.
I know you two are rival enemies:
How comes this gentle concord in the world,
That hatred is so far from jealousy,

To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity?
Lys. My lord, I shall reply amazedly,
Half 'sleep, half waking: but as yet, I swear,
I cannot truly say how I came here.
But, as I think, — for truly would I speak,
And now I do bethink me, so it is —
I came with Hermia hither: our intent
Was to be gone from Athens, where we might,
Without the peril of the Athenian law, —
Ege. Enough, enough, my lord; you have enough:
I beg the law, the law upon his head.
They would have stol'n away; they would, Demetrius,
Thereby to have defeated you and me,
You of your wife, and me of my consent,
Of my consent that she should be your wife.
Dem. My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,
Of this their purpose hither to this wood;
And I in fury hither follow'd them,
Fair Helena in fancy following me.
But, my good lord, I wot not by what power —
But by some power it is — my love to Hermia,
Melted as the snow, seems to me now
As the remembrance of an idle gaud,
Which in my childhood I did dote upon;
And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,
The object and the pleasure of mine eye,
Is only Helena. To her, my lord,
Was I betroth'd ere I saw Hermia:
But, like in sickness, did I loathe this food:

But, as in health, come to my natural taste,
Now do I wish it, love it, long for it,
And will for evermore be true to it.
The. Fair lovers, you are fortunately met:
Of this discourse we more will hear anon.
Egeus, I will overbear your will;
For in the temple, by and by, with us
These couples shall eternally be knit:
And, for the morning now is something worn,
Our purpos'd hunting shall be set aside.
Away with us to Athens! three and three,
We 'll hold a feast in great solemnity. —
Come, Hippolyta. [*Exeunt* Theseus, Hippolyta, Egeus, *and train*
Dem. These things seem small and undistinguishable,
Like far-off mountains turnèd into clouds.
Her. Methinks I see these things with parted eye,
When every thing seems double.
Hel. So methinks:
And I have found Demetrius like a jewel,
Mine own, and not mine own.
Dem. Are you sure
That we are yet awake? It seems to me
That yet we sleep, we dream. — Do not you think
The duke was here, and bid us follow him?
Her. Yea; and my father.
Hel. And Hippolyta.
Lys. And he did bid us follow to the temple.

Dem. Why then we are awake: let 's follow him;
And by the way let us recount our dreams. [*Exeunt*

Bot. [*Awaking*] When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer: my next is, 'Most fair Pyramus.' — Heigh-ho! Peter Quince! Flute, the bellows-mender. Snout, the tinker! Starveling! — God's my life! stolen hence, and left me asleep! I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream, — past the wit of man to say what dream it was: man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was — there is no man can tell what. Methought I was — and methought I had, — but man is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream: it shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom; and I will sing it in the latter end of a play, before the duke: peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death. [*Exit*

Scene II

Athens. Quince's *house*

Enter Quince, Flute, Snout, *and* Starveling

Quin. Have you sent to Bottom's house? is he come home yet?

Star. He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt he is transported.

Flu. If he come not, then the play is marred; it goes not forward, doth it?

Quin. It is not possible: you have not a man in all Athens able to discharge Pyramus but he.

Flu. No, he hath simply the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens.

Quin. Yea, and the best person too; and he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.

Flu. You must say 'paragon': a paramour is, God bless us, a thing of naught.

Enter Snug

Snug. Masters, the duke is coming from the temple, and there is two or three lords and ladies more married: if our sport had gone forward, we had all been made men.

Flu. O sweet bully Bottom. Thus hath he lost sixpence a day during his life; he could not have 'scaped sixpence a day: an the duke had not given him sixpence a day for playing Pyramus, I 'll be hanged; he would have deserved it; sixpence a day in Pyramus, or nothing

Enter Bottom

Bot. Where are these lads? where are these hearts?

Quin. Bottom! O most courageous day! O most happy hour!

Bot. Masters, I am to discourse wonders: but ask me not what; for if I tell you, I am no true Athenian. I will tell you every thing, right as it fell out.

Quin. Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

Bot. Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is, that the duke hath dined. Get your apparel together, good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps; meet presently at the palace; every man look o'er his part; for the short and the long is, our play is preferred. In any case, let Thisby have clean linen; and let not him that plays the lion pare his nails, for they shall hang out for the lion's claws. And, most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath; and I do not doubt but to hear them say, it is a sweet comedy. No more words: away! go, away! [*Exeunt*

ACT V

Scene I

Athens. The palace of Theseus

Enter Theseus, Hippolyta, Philostrate, Lords, *and* Attendants

Hip. 'T is strange, my Theseus, that these lovers speak of.

The. More strange than true: I never may believe
These antique fables nor these fairy toys.
Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends.
The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact.
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,
That is, the madman: the lover, all as frantic,
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.
Such tricks hath strong imagination

That, if it would but apprehend some joy,
It comprehends some bringer of that joy;
Or in the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush supposed a bear!

Hip. But all the story of the night told over,
And all their minds transfigur'd so together,
More witnesseth than fancy's images,
And grows to something of great constancy;
But, howsoever, strange and admirable.

The. Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.

Enter Lysander, Demetrius, Hermia *and* Helena

Joy, gentle friends! joy, and fresh days of love
Accompany your hearts!

Lys. More than to us
Wait in your royal walks, your board, your bed!

The. Come now; what masques, what dances shall we have
To wear away this long age of three hours
Between our after-supper and bedtime?
Where is our usual manager of mirth?
What revels are in hand? Is there no play,
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour?
Call Philostrate.

Phil. Here, mighty Theseus.

The. Say, what abridgement have you for this evening?
What masque? what music? How shall we beguile
The lazy time, if not with some delight?

Phil. There is a brief how many sports are ripe:
Make choice of which your highness will see first.
[*Giving a paper*

The. [*Reads*]
The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung
By an Athenian eunuch to the harp.

We 'll none of that: that have I told my love,
In glory of my kinsman Hercules.

[*Reads*] The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.

That is an old device; and it was play'd
When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.

[*Reads*] The thrice three Muses mourning for the death
Of Learning, late deceas'd in beggary.

That is some satire, keen and critical,
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.

[*Reads*] A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus,
And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth.

Merry and tragical! tedious and brief!
That is, hot ice and wondrous strange snow.
How shall we find the concord of this discord?

Phil. A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,
Which is as brief as I have known a play;
But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,
Which makes it tedious; for in all the play
There is not one word apt, one player fitted:
And tragical, my noble lord, it is;

For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.
Which, when I saw rehears'd, I must confess,
Made mine eyes water; but more merry tears
The passion of loud laughter never shed.
The. What are they that do play it?
Phil. Hard-handed men, that work in Athens here,
Which never labour'd in their minds till now;
And now have toil'd their unbreath'd memories
With this same play, against your nuptial.
The. And we will hear it.
Phil. No, my noble lord;
It is not for you: I have heard it over,
And it is nothing, nothing in the world;
Unless you can find sport in their intents,
Extremely stretch'd and conn'd with cruel pain,
To do you service.
The. I will hear that play;
For never any thing can be amiss,
When simpleness and duty tender it.
Go, bring them in: and take your places, ladies.
[*Exit* PHILOSTRATE
Hip. I love not to see wretchedness o'ercharg'd,
And duty in his service perishing.
The. Why, gentle sweet, you shall see no such thing.
Hip. He says they can do nothing in this kind.
The. The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing.
Our sport shall be to take what they mistake:
And what poor duty cannot do, noble respect

Takes it in might, not merit.
Where I have come, great clerks have purposèd
To greet me with premeditated welcomes;
Where I have seen them shiver and look pale,
Make periods in the midst of sentences,
Throttle their practic'd accent in their fears,
And, in conclusion, dumbly have broke off,
Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,
Out of this silence yet I pick'd a welcome;
And in the modesty of fearful duty
I read as much as from the rattling tongue
Of saucy and audacious eloquence.
Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity
In least speak most, to my capacity.

Enter Philostrate

Phil. So please your grace, the Prologue is address'd.

The. Let him approach. [*Flourish of Trumpets*

Enter Quince for the Prologue

Prol. If we offend, it is with our good-will.
That you should think, we come not to offend,
But with good-will. To show our simple skill,
That is the true beginning of our end.
Consider then we come but in despite.
We do not come as minding to content you,
Our true intent is. All for your delight,
We are not here. That you should here repent you,
The actors are at hand; and by their show
You shall know all that you are like to know.

The. This fellow doth not stand upon points.

Lys. He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt; he knows not the stop. A good moral, my lord: It is not enough to speak, but to speak true.

Hip. Indeed he hath played on his prologue like a child on a recorder; a sound, but not in government.

The. His speech was like a tangled chain: nothing impaired, but all disordered. Who is next?

Enter PYRAMUS *and* THISBE, WALL, MOONSHINE *and* LION, *as in dumb show*

Prol. Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show;
But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.
This man is Pyramus, if you would know;
This beauteous lady Thisby is certain.
This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present
Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder;
And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content
To whisper; at the which let no man wonder.
This man, with lantern, dog, and bush of thorn,
Presenteth Moonshine; for, if you will know,
By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn
To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.
This grisly beast, which Lion hight by name,
The trusty Thisby, coming first by night,
Did scare away, or rather did affright;
And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,
Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.
Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,
And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain:
Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,
He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast;

And, Thisby tarrying in mulberry shade,
His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,
Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain
At large discourse, while here they do remain.

[*Exeunt* Prologue, Pyramus, Thisbe, Lion, *and* Moonshine

The. I wonder if the lion be to speak.

Dem. No wonder, my lord: one lion may, when many asses do.

Wall. In this same interlude it doth befall
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;
And such a wall, as I would have you think,
That had in it a crannied hole or chink,
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,
Did whisper often very secretly.
This loam, this rough-cast, and this stone, doth show
That I am that same wall; the truth is so:
And this the cranny is, right and sinister,
Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

The. Would you desire lime and hair to speak better?

Dem. It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard discourse, my lord.

The. Pyramus draws near the wall: silence!

Re-enter Pyramus

Pyr. O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!
O night, which ever art when day is not!
O night, O night! alack, alack, alack,
I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot! —
And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,

That stand'st between her father's ground and mine!
Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,
Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne! [WALL *holds up his fingers*
Thanks, courteous wall: Jove shield thee well for this!
But what see I? No Thisby do I see.
O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!
Curs'd be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

The. The wall, methinks, being sensible, should curse again.

Pyr. No, in truth, sir, he should not. 'Deceiving me' is Thisby's cue: she is to enter now, and I am to spy her through the wall. You shall see, it will fall pat as I told you. Yonder she comes.

Re-enter THISBE

This. O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,
For parting my fair Pyramus and me!
My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones,
Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

Pyr. I see a voice: now will I to the chink
To spy an I can hear my Thisby's face.
Thisby!

This. My love! thou art, my love I think.

Pyr. Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;
And like Limander am I trusty still.

This. And I like Helen, till the fates me kill.

Pyr. Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

This. As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

Pyr. O, kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!

This. I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

Pyr. Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

This. 'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.

Wall. Thus have I, Wall, my part dischargèd so;
And, being done, thus Wall away doth go.

[*Exeunt* Wall, Pyramus, *and* Thisbe

The. Now is the mural down between the two neighbours.

Dem. No remedy, my lord, when walls are so wilful to hear without warning.

Hip. This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

The. The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.

Hip. It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

The. If we imagine no worse of them than they of themselves, they may pass for excellent men. Here come two noble beasts in, a moon and a lion.

Enter Lion *and* Moonshine

Lion. You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,
May now perchance both quake and tremble here,
When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.
Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am
A lion fell, nor else no lion's dam;
For, if I should as lion come in strife
Into this place, 't were pity of my life.

The. A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience.

Dem. The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I saw.

Lys. This lion is a very fox for his valour.

The. True; and a goose for his discretion.

Dem. Not so, my lord; for his valour cannot carry his discretion; and the fox carries the goose.

The. His discretion, I am sure, cannot carry his valour; for the goose carries not the fox. It is well: leave it to his discretion, and let us listen to the moon.

Moon. This lantern doth the hornèd moon present;—

Dem. He should have worn the horns on his head.

The. He is no crescent, and his horns are invisible within the circumference.

Moon. This lantern doth the hornèd moon present;
Myself the man i' th' moon do seem to be.

The. This is the greatest error of all the rest: the man should be put into the lantern. How is it else the man i' the moon?

Dem. He dares not come there for the candle; for, you see, it is already in snuff.

Hip. I am aweary of this moon: would he would change!

The. It appears, by his small light of discretion, that he is in the wane: but yet, in courtesy, in all reason, we must stay the time.

Lys. Proceed, Moon.

Moon. All that I have to say is to tell you that the lantern is the moon; I, the man in the moon; this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush; and this dog, my dog.

Dem. Why, all these should be in the lantern, for they are in the moon. But silence! here comes Thisbe.

Re-enter Thisbe

This. This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love?

Lion. [*Roars*] Oh— [Thisbe *runs off*

Dem. Well roared, Lion.

The. Well run, Thisbe.

Hip. Well shone, Moon. — Truly, the moon shines with a good grace.

[*The* Lion *shakes* Thisbe's *mantle, and exit*

The. Well moused, Lion.

Dem. And then came Pyramus.

Lys. And so the lion vanished.

Re-enter Pyramus

Pyr. Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams;
I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright;
For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,
I trust to take of truest Thisby sight.
But stay, O spite!
But mark, poor knight,
What dreadful dole is here!
Eyes, do you see?
How can it be?
O dainty duck! O dear!
Thy mantle good,
What, stain'd with blood!
Approach, ye Furies fell!
O Fates! come, come,
Cut thread and thrum;
Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!

The. This passion and the death of a dear friend would go near to make a man look sad.

Hip. Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

Pyr. O, wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame?
Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear:
Which is — no, no — which was the fairest dame
That liv'd, that lov'd, that lik'd, that look'd with cheer.
Come, tears, confound;
Out, sword, and wound
The pap of Pyramus. —
Ay, that left pap,
Where heart doth hop: [*Stabs himself*
Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.
Now am I dead,
Now am I fled;
My soul is in the sky:
Tongue, lose thy light;
Moon, take thy flight:
[*Exit* MOONSHINE
Now die, die, die, die, die. [*Dies*

Dem. No die, but an ace, for him; for he is but one.

Lys. Less than an ace, man; for he is dead; he is nothing.

The. With the help of a surgeon he might yet recover, and prove an ass.

Hip. How chance Moonshine is gone before Thisbe comes back and finds her lover?

The. She will find him by starlight. Here she comes; and her passion ends the play.

Stop

Re-enter Thisbe

Hip. Methinks she should not use a long one for such a Pyramus: I hope she will be brief.

Dem. A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which Thisbe, is the better; he for a man, God warrant us; she for a woman, God bless us.

Lys. She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

Dem. And thus she means, *videlicet:* —

This.
Asleep, my love?
What, dead, my dove?
O Pyramus, arise!
Speak, speak. Quite dumb?
Dead, dead? A tomb
Must cover thy sweet eyes
These lily lips,
This cherry nose,
These yellow cowslip cheeks
Are gone, are gone:
Lovers, make moan:
His eyes were green as leeks.
O Sisters three,
Come, come to me,
With hands as pale as milk;
Lay them in gore,
Since you have shore
With shears his thread of silk.
Tongue, not a word:
Come, trusty sword;
Come, blade, my breast imbrue; [*Stabs herself*
And farewell, friends, —
Thus Thisby ends, —
Adieu, adieu, adieu! [*Dies*

The. Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

Dem. Ay, and Wall too.

Bot. [*Starting up*] No, I assure you; the wall is down that parted their fathers. Will it please you to see the epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance, between two of our company?

The. No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no excuse. Never excuse; for, when the players are all dead, there need none to be blamed. Marry, if he that writ it had played Pyramus and hanged himself in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy: and so it is, truly; and very notably discharged. But, come, your Bergomask: let your epilogue alone. [*A dance*

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve;
Lovers, to bed; 't is almost fairy time.
I fear we shall out-sleep the coming morn
As much as we this night have overwatch'd.
This palpable-gross play hath well beguil'd
The heavy gait of night. Sweet friends, to bed.
A fortnight hold we this solemnity
In nightly revels and new jollity. [*Exeunt*

Enter PUCK

Puck. Now the hungry lion roars,
And the wolf behowls the moon;
Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,
All with weary task fordone.
Now the wasted brands do glow,

Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud,
Puts the wretch that lies in woe
In remembrance of a shroud.
Now it is the time of night
That the graves, all gaping wide,
Every one lets forth his sprite,
In the church-way paths to glide:
And we fairies, that do run
By the triple Hecate's team,
From the presence of the sun,
Following darkness like a dream,
Now are frolic: not a mouse
Shall disturb this hallow'd house:
I am sent with broom before,
To sweep the dust behind the door.

Enter Oberon *and* Titania, *with their train*

Obe. Through the house give glimmering light,
By the dead and drowsy fire:
Every elf and fairy sprite
Hop as light as bird from brier;
And this ditty, after me,
Sing, and dance it trippingly.

Tita. First, rehearse your song by rote,
To each word a warbling note:
Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
Will we sing, and bless this place.

[*Song and dance*

Obe. Now, until the break of day,
Through this house each fairy stray.

To the best bride-bed will we,
Which by us shall blessèd be;
And the issue there create
Ever shall be fortunate.
So shall all the couples three
Ever true in loving be;
And the blots of Nature's hand
Shall not in their issue stand;
Never mole, hair-lip, nor scar,
Nor mark prodigious, such as are
Despisèd in nativity,
Shall upon their children be.
With this field-dew consecrate,
Every fairy take his gait;
And each several chamber bless,
Through this palace with sweet peace:
And the owner of it blest,
Ever shall in safety rest.
Trip away; make no stay;
Meet me all by break of day.

[*Exeunt* OBERON, TITANIA, *and train*

Puck. If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumber'd here,
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend:
If you pardon, we will mend.
And, as I 'm an honest Puck,

If we have unearnèd luck
Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,
We will make amends ere long;
Else the Puck a liar call:
So, good-night unto you all.
Give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends. [*Exit*

NOTES

The following contractions are used in the notes: A. S. = Anglo-Saxon; Fr. = French; O. Fr. = Old French; Eng. = English; M. E. = Middle English; Lat. = Latin; It. = Italian; Ger. = German; Sp. = Spanish; Abbott = Dr. Abbott's *Shakespearean Grammar;* cf. = confer (compare).

ACT I

Scene I

Page 27. 1. **Theseus.** The name of Theseus and that of Hippolyta, queen of the Amazons, may have been borrowed by Shakespeare from Chaucer's 'Knight's Tale,' although there is nothing else in the play for which he can have been indebted to the same source. But he was no doubt acquainted with the story of Theseus in North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives.*

4. **She lingers my desires.** Delays the accomplishment of my desires.

5. **A step-dame, or a dowager.** She has a life interest in the property which falls to the heir at her death.

6. **Withering out.** Causing the revenue to dwindle as she herself withers away.

13. **Pert.** Lively; used in a good sense, and not, as now, equivalent to something a little less than impudent, saucy.

15. **Companion.** Fellow. These two words have completely exchanged their meanings. *Companion* is not now used contemptuously as it once was, and as *fellow* frequently is.

Page 28. 19. **With pomp, with triumph.** A triumph was a public exhibition or show, such as was originally used to celebrate a victory. The title of Bacon's 37th Essay is 'Of Masques and Triumphs,' and the two words appear to have been synonymous, for the Essay treats of masques alone.

20. **Duke.** Leader, from the Lat. *dux;* a title which Shakespeare might have found attached to Theseus in Chaucer. Cf. the 'Knight's Tale' (l. 860).

21. **What 's the news with thee?** What has happened to thee?

32. **Stolen the impression of her fantasy.** Secretly stamped his image on her imagination.

33. **Gawds.** Trifling ornaments, toys. — **Conceits.** Fanciful devices.

34. **Knacks.** Knick-knacks, trinkets.

41. **The ancient privilege of Athens.** The laws of Solon of Athens gave a father the power of life and death over his child.

Page 29. 45. **Immediately provided,** etc. The phrase, as Steevens has remarked, smacks of an attorney's office.

50. **And within his power.** Supply 'it is.' For this ellipsis see Abbott, sect. 403.

54. **In this kind.** In this respect.

61. **To plead my thoughts.** To utter my thoughts by way of plea or argument.

65. **To die the death.** To die; generally but not uniformly applied to death inflicted by law.

68. **Know of your youth.** Ascertain from your youth. — **Blood.** Passion as opposed to reason.

Page 30. 69. **Whether.** A monosyllable; as frequently in Shakespeare.

70. **The livery of a nun.** *Livery,* which now denotes the dress of servants, formerly signified any distinctive dress, as in the present passage. The virgins sacred to Diana were prohibited from marriage. Shakespeare in speaking of them uses the Christian word *nun.*

71. **For aye.** Forever. (A. S. *á,* or *aa,* ever, always.) — **Mew'd.** Penned up, cooped up.

75. **Maiden pilgrimage.** A course of life passed in virginity. This sense of *pilgrimage* is in accordance with the usage of Scripture.

76. **Earthlier happy.** More earthly happy, happier in an earthly sense.

80. **My virgin patent.** My privilege of virginity and the liberty that belongs to it.

81. **Whose unwishèd yoke.** The second folio, to mend the grammar, reads 'to whose unwish'd yoke.'

90. **Austerity.** Severe self-mortification; used technically of the religious discipline of a nun.

92. **Crazèd title.** A title with a flaw in it.

Page 31. 99. **Deriv'd.** Descended.

100. **As well possess'd.** With as good possessions or property.

102. **If not with vantage.** If I have not even an advantage over him in this respect.

106. **To his head.** Before his face, openly and unreservedly.

120. **Extenuate.** Mitigate, weaken the force of.

126. **Nearly that concerns.** That nearly concerns.

Page 32. 130. **Belike.** Probably, by likelihood.

131. **Beteem them.** Allow them.

136. **Cross.** Vexation, trial; from the figurative usage of the word in Scripture.

137. **Misgraffèd.** Ill grafted.

141. **Sympathy.** Equality, harmony.

145. **Collied.** Black; literally, begrimed as with soot or coal. In Herefordshire *colly* signifies *dirty, smutty.*

146. **In a spleen.** In a swift, sudden fit, as of passion or caprice.

Page 33. 155. **Fancy's.** Love's.

156. **Persuasion.** Opinion, conviction. It also signifies a persuasive argument, and perhaps has that sense here.

160. **Respects.** Regards, considers.

164. **Forth.** Out of.

167. **To do observance to a morn of May.** To observe the rites of May-day. Cf. IV, i, 137, and Chaucer, 'Knight's Tale' (l. 1500): —

> And for to doon his observance to May.

'It was anciently the custom for all ranks of people to go out a Maying early on the first of May. Bourne tells us that in his time, in the villages in the North of England, the juvenile part of both sexes were wont to rise a little after midnight on the morning of that day, and walk to some neighboring wood, accompanied with music and the blowing of horns, where they broke down branches from the trees and adorned them with nosegays and crowns of flowers. This done, they returned homewards with their booty about the time of sunrise, and made their doors and windows triumph in the flowery spoil.' (Brand's *Popular Antiquities.*)

Scarcely an English poet from Chaucer to Tennyson is without a reference to the simple customs by which our ancestors celebrated the advent of the flowers. May-dew was held of virtue as a cosmetic. Mrs. Pepys would go to Woolwich for air and to gather May-dew while her husband diverted himself at Vauxhall. For further information see Brand's *Popular Antiquities,* and Chambers's *Book of Days* (i, 570–582).

170. **With the golden head.** Cupid's arrows in the old mythology were tipped with either gold or lead; the former causing, the latter repelling, love.

171. **Venus' doves.** They drew her chariot.

173. **Fire which burn'd,** etc. See Virgil, *Æneid* (iv, 584, etc.). Steevens pointed out the anachronism of making Dido and Æneas earlier in point of time than Theseus. But Shakespeare's Hermia lived in the latter part of the sixteenth century and was contemporary with Nick Bottom the weaver. — **Carthage** as an adjective occurs several times in Marlowe's *Tragedy of Dido.*

175. **Broke.** Broken. Shakespeare uses both forms.

Page 34. 182. **Your fair.** Your beauty.

183. **Lode-stars.** Leading or guiding stars; as the polar star is to sailors.

186. **Favour.** Outward appearance, aspect; with a play upon the other meaning of the word.

190. **Bated.** Excepted.

191. **Translated.** Transformed.

Page 35. 209. **To-morrow night.** There is a discrepancy here in point of time. At the opening of the play there are four days before the new moon. — **Phœbe,** one of the names of the moon, as sister to Phœbus, the sun.

212. **Still.** Constantly.

215. **Faint primrose-beds.** Beds on which rest those who are faint and weary. This proleptic use of the adjective is common in Shakespeare.

219. **Stranger companies.** An emendation of Theobald's for 'strange companions,' which is the reading of the quartos and the folios.

223. **Morrow.** To-morrow.

226. **Other some.** Others.

231. **Admiring of.** In this construction *admiring* is a verbal noun, originally governed by a preposition *in* or *on*, which has disappeared, but which exists sometimes in the degraded form *a*, in such words as *a-hunting, a-building.*

Page 36. 232. **Holding no quantity.** Having no proportion to the estimate formed of them.

233. **Transpose.** Transform.

242. **Eyne.** Eyes; the Old English plural, the Scotch *een*, which occurs again in II, ii, 98; III, ii, 138; V, i, 176. It occurs in Chaucer in the forms *eien, eyen.* (A. S. *ége̊an.*)

249. **It is a dear expense.** It will cost me dear, because it will be in return for my procuring him a sight of my rival.

251. **His sight.** The sight of him.

Scene II

2. **You were best.** It were best for you. — **Generally.** In Bottom's language *generally* means *particularly, severally.*

3. **The scrip.** The written document.

Page 37. 10. **Grow to a point.** This is the reading of the quartos. The first three folios have 'grow on to a point,' and the fourth 'grow on to appoint.' It is not always quite safe to interpret Bottom, but he seems to mean 'come to the point.'

11. **Marry.** A common exclamation, from the name of the Virgin Mary.

25. **Gallant.** The reading of the quartos. The folios have 'gallantly.'

27. **Ask.** Require.

29. **Condole.** Bottom of course blunders, but it is impossible to say what word he intended to employ.

30. **To the rest: yet my,** etc. Theobald's reading. The early copies print 'To the rest yet, my,' etc., which may be the right punctuation, *yet* in this unemphatic position being used in the sense of *however*.

31. **Ercles.** The part of Hercules, in the old play to which reference is made, was like that of Herod in the mysteries, one in which the actor could indulge to the utmost his passion for ranting.

32. **To tear a cat in.** To rant violently. — **To make all split.** Used to denote violent action or uproar; originally a sailor's phrase.

Page 38. 47. **A wandering knight.** A knight errant.

49. **Let not me play a woman.** Women's parts were commonly played by men or boys till after the Restoration in 1660.

51. **All one.** All the same, no matter.

52. **You may speak as small.** In as thin and clear a voice.

53. **An.** If. Printed *And* in the old copies.

55. **Thisne, Thisne.** These words are printed in italic in the old copies, as if they represented a proper name, and so *Thisne* has been regarded as a blunder of Bottom's for *Thisbe*. But as he has the name right in the very next line, it seems more probable that *Thisne* signifies *in this way;* and he then gives a specimen of how he would aggravate his voice. Mr. Grant White reads, 'Listen, listen.'

Page 39. 82. **Aggravate.** Bottom of course means the very opposite.

83. **Sucking-dove.** Bottom's blunder for *sucking lamb*.

84. **An 't were.** As if it were.

93. **Discharge.** Perform. It appears to have been a technical word belonging to the stage.

Page 40. 94. **Orange-tawny.** Reddish yellow. — **Purple-in-grain.** The dye obtained from the *kermes* (whence Fr. *cramoisi*, and Eng. *crimson*), an insect which attached itself to the leaves of the Kermes oak (*Quercus coccifera*), a tree found in the south of Europe, especially in Spain, and also in India and Persia. An interesting discussion of the etymology of *grain* in the sense of *dye* will be found in Marsh's *Lectures on the English Language*, (66–75).

95. **French-crown-colour.** The color of the gold coin of that name.

105. **Properties.** A theatrical term for all the adjuncts of a play except the scenery and the costumes of the actors.

111. **Hold or cut bow-strings.** Keep the appointment or give up shooting. Capell seems to have hit upon the true explanation of this expression. 'When a party was made at butts, assurance of meeting was given in the words of that phrase: the sense of the person using them being, that he would "hold," or keep promise, or they might "cut his bow-strings," demolish him for an archer.'

ACT II

Scene I

Page 41. 3. **Thorough.** Shakespeare often uses this form of *through.*

7. **Moon's.** Here a dissyllable, as if *moones.* — **Sphere.** Orbit.

9. **Orbs.** The circles in the grass called fairy rings, popularly believed to be caused by the fairies dancing.

10. **Her pensioners.** Her bodyguard. Henry VIII and Elizabeth both had such a band of attendants. They were young gentlemen of rank and fortune who were selected for their handsome faces and figures.

12. **Favours.** Love-tokens.

15. **A pearl in every cowslip's ear.** There are numberless allusions to the wearing of jewels in the ear by both men and women, in Shakespeare and in contemporary writers.

16. **Lob.** Equivalent to *lubber, lout,* and like these words it is used contemptuously.

17. **Elves.** Fairies. (A. S. *ælf.*)

20. **Fell.** Fierce; from O. Fr. *fel,* It. *fello,* with which *felon* is connected. — **Wrath.** Wroth, angry. So written for the sake of the rhyme.

Page 42. 23. **Changeling.** Usually a child left by the fairies: here, as a fairy is the speaker, it denotes the one taken by them.

25. **To trace.** To traverse, wander through.

30. **Square.** Quarrel.

32. **Either.** Used as a monosyllable.

33. **Shrewd.** Mischievous.

35. **That frights.** The later folios read *fright,* so as to agree with *skim,* etc., that follow. Others rectify the irregularity by reading *skims, labors,* and so on. But it is not necessary to correct what Shakespeare may very well have written. The first verb *frights* is of course governed by *he,* which immediately precedes. The others are in agreement with *you.*

36. **Quern.** A hand mill.

38. **Barm.** Yeast; so called in many provincial dialects still.

40. **Hobgoblin.** Made up of *Hob* — a popular corruption of *Robin*, which is a corruption of *Robert* — and *goblin*, from O. Fr. *gobelin*, a rogue.

47. **A gossip's bowl.** Originally a christening cup; for a gossip or godsib was properly a sponsor. Hence, from signifying those who were associated in the festivities of a christening, it came to denote generally those who were accustomed to make merry together. Archbishop Trench mentions that the word retains its original signification among the peasantry of Hampshire. He adds, 'Gossips are, first, the sponsors, brought by the act of a common sponsorship into affinity and near familiarity with one another; secondly, those sponsors, who being thus brought together, allow themselves one with the other in familiar, and then in trivial and idle, talk; thirdly, any who allow themselves in this trivial and idle talk.'

48. **Crab.** Crab apple.

Page 43. 50. **Dewlap.** Spelled *dewlop* in the quartos and folios. It is properly the loose skin which hangs from the throat of cattle.

51. **Aunt.** A familiar name for an old woman. Mr. Grant White remarks, 'In New England villages good-natured old people are still called "aunt" and "uncle" by the whole community.'

54. **Tailor.** Johnson says, 'The custom of crying "tailor" at a sudden fall backwards, I think I remember to have observed. He that slips beside his chair, falls as a tailor squats upon his board.'

56. **Neeze.** Sneeze. (A. S. *niesan*, Ger. *niesen*.) Similarly we find the two forms of the same word *knap* and *snap; top* and *stop; cratch* and *scratch; lightly* and *slightly; quinsy* and *squinancy*.

58. **But, room, fairy!** Johnson, on account of the meter, would read *fairy* as a trisyllable. Dr. Abbott, for the same reason, would prolong *room* (sect. 484).

67. **Pipes of corn.** Pipes made of oat straw. — **Versing love.** Making love in verse.

69. **Steppe.** So the first quarto. To the reading *steppe* it is objected that the word as applied to the vast plains of Central Asia was not known in Shakespeare's day, but it is dangerous to assert a proposition which may be disproved by a single instance of the contrary. There is certainly no *a priori* reason why the present passage should not furnish that instance, inasmuch as a word of similar origin, *horde*, was perfectly well known in England at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Page 44. 75. **Glance at.** Hint at, indirectly attack.

78. **Perigenia.** In North's Plutarch she is called Perigouna, the daughter of the famous robber Sinnis. By her Theseus had a son Menalippus.

80. **Ariadne**, who guided Theseus out of the labyrinth of Crete, was the daughter of Minos, King of Crete. — **Antiopa**, according to some, was the Amazon queen and the mother of Hippolytus.

82. **Middle summer's spring**. The beginning of midsummer.

84. **Pavèd fountain**. A fountain with a pebbly bottom.

85. **Margent**. Margin.

88. **Piping to us in vain**. Because we could not dance to them.

91. **Pelting**. Paltry, insignificant. The folios have *petty*.

92. **That they**, etc. The plural follows loosely as representing the collection of individual rivers. — **Their continents**. The banks that contain them, or hold them in.

95. **His** is the old possession of *it* as well as of *he*. The form *its* is first found in a book issued in 1598. It does not occur in the Bible of 1611, or in Spenser, but rarely in Shakespeare, only thrice in Milton, and is not common till Dryden.

98. **Nine men's morris**. A rustic game, which is still extant in some parts of England, so called from the counters (Fr. *merelles*) with which it is played. It is described by James in the Variorum Shakespeare as follows: 'In that part of Warwickshire where Shakespeare was educated, and the neighboring parts of Northamptonshire, the shepherds and other boys dig up the turf with their knives to represent a sort of imperfect chess-board. It consists of a square, sometimes only a foot diameter, sometimes three or four yards. Within this is another square, every side of which is parallel to the external square; and these squares are joined by lines drawn from each corner of both squares, and the middle of each line. One party, or player, has wooden pegs, the other stones, which they move in such a manner as to take up each other's men, as they are called, and the area of the inner square is called the pound, in which the men taken up are impounded. These figures are by the country people called *Nine Men's Morris*, or *Merrils;* and are so called because each party has nine men. These figures are always cut upon the green turf or leys, as they are called, or upon the grass at the end of plowed lands, and in rainy seasons never fail to be choked up with mud.'

101. **Human mortals**. Titania speaks as a fairy. — **Want**. Lack, are without.

103. **Therefore**. Because of our quarrel.

Page 45. 106. **This distemperature**. This disturbance between Oberon and Titania.

109. **Hiems**. Cf. *Love's Labor's Lost* (V, ii, 901): 'This side is Hiems, Winter.'

112. **Childing autumn**. Autumn that brings forth the products of the year.

113. **Mazèd**. Bewildered, thrown into confusion.

121. **Henchman.** A page. The word is of uncertain origin. Skeat says it is almost certain that the right etymology is M. E. *hengest*, a horse, and Eng. *man*.

123. **Votaress.** One that had taken vows.

124. **Spicèd.** Laden with spices, balmy.

127. **The embarkèd traders on the flood.** The merchants embarked upon the sea.

Page 46. 134. **Intend you stay?** *To* is frequently omitted by Shakespeare in such constructions.

144. **Thou rememberest**, etc. The reference in this passage is to a pageant given by the Earl of Leicester, 'Cupid all arm'd,' for the entertainment of Queen Elizabeth, during her visit to Kenilworth. 'A fair vestal thronèd' is the queen, and the 'little western flower' is the Countess of Essex, whom Leicester afterward married. Cf. Halpin's interpretation, in Furness's Variorum edition.

146. **On a dolphin's back.** Like Arion, who charmed the fish with his song and was saved from drowning.

148. **Civil.** Softened and, as it were, civilized by the refining influence of music.

156. **As.** As if.

157. **Might.** Could, was able.

Page 47. 164. **Love-in-idleness.** One of the names given to the pansy.

170. **The leviathan.** The margins of the Bibles in Shakespeare's day explained *leviathan* as a whale, and so no doubt he thought it.

171. **Put a girdle round about the earth.** A common expression for making a voyage round the world.

Page 48. 188. **Wood.** Mad, raging.

210. **Impeach.** Bring into question, expose to reproach.

Page 49. 216. **Your virtue is my privilege: for that**, etc. Your virtue is my protection, because it is not, etc. This is the reading of the early copies.

220. **In my respect.** In my regard or estimation.

223. **Brakes.** Thickets.

227. **Apollo flies**, etc. Apollo, in love with the unwilling Daphne, pursued her, and was on the point of overtaking her, when the nymph was turned into a laurel tree.

228. **The griffin.** A fabulous creature, half beast, half bird of prey; now, like the unicorn, only known in the zoölogy of heraldry.

229. **Bootless.** Profitless, worthless; from A. S. *bót*, profit, advantage.

231. **I will not stay thy questions.** I will not wait to talk with thee.

240. **Upon the hand.** This expression comes to be nearly equivalent to *by the hand*, while with this is combined the idea of local nearness to the beloved object which is contained in the ordinary meaning of *upon*.

Page 50. 246. **Grows.** The verb is attracted into the singular by the nearer subject *violet*.

247. **Woodbine.** Old spelling *woodbynd* — so called because it winds about and binds trees.

248. **Eglantine.** The sweet briar.

252. **Weed.** Dress, garment. Cf. widow's weeds.

262. **Fond.** Doting.

Scene II

Page 51. 1. **A roundel.** Like *round*, and *roundelay*, it signifies both a circular dance, and a part song or catch.

4. **Some war.** *War* is imperative = let some war. — **Rere-mice.** Bats.

7. **Quaint.** Fine, delicate.

9. **Double.** Forked, cloven.

11. **Newts.** Lizards. A *newt* is an evet or eft (A. S. *efete*), the *n* of the article having become attached to the following word as in *nonce*, *noumpere* = (umpire), and others. In *adder* the opposite process has taken place, and *a nadder* (A. S. *næddre*) has become *an adder;* so *an auger* is really *a nauger* (A. S. *nafegár*).

13. **Philomel,** or Philomela, the daughter of Pandion, was transformed into a nightingale and lamented her sad fate in the plaintive notes of the bird which bears her name.

Page 52. 29. **Ounce.** *Felis uncia*, an animal resembling the leopard, but much smaller.

30. **Pard.** Panther or leopard.

41. **One troth.** One faith or trust, pledged to each other in betrothal.

44. **Take the sense . . . innocence.** Understand my innocent meaning.

Page 53. 53. **Beshrew.** Used in asservations to give emphasis, or as here for a mild oath, a 'mischief on,' 'evil befall.'

56. **In human modesty . . . distant.** The sense is clear, though the syntax is imperfect. In human modesty (let there be) such separation, etc. 'So far be distant' is merely a repetition of the same thing.

67. **Approve.** Prove, test, try.

Page 54. 74. **Dank.** Damp, wet.

77. **Churl.** A peasant, boor; and hence one of rough and rude manners.

78. **Owe.** Own, possess.
85. **Darkling.** In the dark.
96. **As a monster.** In apposition with *my presence.*
Page 55. 98. **Sphery.** Starlike. *Sphere* is used by Shakespeare to denote first the orbit in which a star moves, and then the star itself.
117. **Ripe not.** Grow not ripe, ripen not.
118. **Touching now the point of human skill.** Having reached the height of discernment possible to man.
Page 57. 152. **An if.** If indeed.
153. **Of all loves.** By everything that is loving, I entreat you.

ACT III

Scene I

Page 58. 2. **Pat, pat.** Just, exactly.
4. **Hawthorn-brake.** Thicket of hawthorns.
7. **Bully.** A term of familiarity addressed by his companions to a jolly, blustering fellow.
12. **By 'r lakin.** By our ladykin, or little lady. — **Parlous.** Perilous, dangerous.
14. **When all is done.** After all.
15. **Not a whit.** This is a redundant expression, since *not* itself is a contraction of *nâwiht,* or *nawhit.*
18. **More better.** This double comparative was common in Shakespeare's time, and is suitable to Bottom as being rather exaggerated language, and not because it was thought ungrammatical.
Page 59. 22. **In eight and six.** In alternate verses of eight and six syllables each; the common ballad meter.
25. **Afeard.** Afraid: though here a provincialism appropriate to rustics, the word was otherwise in good use.
37. **Defect.** For *effect.* Bottom's blunders are generally intelligible.
41. **It were pity of my life.** It were a sad thing for my life, that is, for me.
45. **There is two.** Here the singular verb precedes the plural subject, the subject being as yet future, and as it were unsettled. (Abbott, sect. 335.)
Page 60. 59. **Present.** Act the part of.
75. **Cue.** A player's word; from Fr. *queue,* a tail. It technically denotes the last words of a speech which give the next speaker the hint when to begin. Hence it signifies generally the part an actor has to perform.

Page 61. 78. **Toward**. Ready to be acted.

Page 62. 115. **You see an ass-head of your own**. Bottom indulges in what appears to have been a piece of familiar banter of the time, without knowing how much it affected himself.

118. **Translated**. Transformed.

124. **The ousel-cock**. The male blackbird. In the quartos and folios it is spelled *woosell*, or *woosel*, and is probably the same as Fr. *oiseau*, of which the old form was *oisel*.

Page 63. 130. **Plain-song cuckoo**. So called from his monotonous note. The plain-song was the simple melody on which variations were made.

133. **Would set his wit to so foolish a bird**. Would match his wit against a cuckoo's.

145. **Gleek**. Jest, scoff.

154. **Still**. Ever, constantly.

Page 64. 165. **Apricocks**. The earlier and correct spelling of *apricots*. The word has a curious history. In Latin the fruit was called *praecoqua*, or *praecocia*, from being early ripe. Hence in Arabic it became *barquq*, or *birquq*, and with the article *al-barquq*, or *al-birquq;* Sp., *albarcoque;* Fr., *abricot;* and Eng. *abricot, abricoct, apricock*, or *apricot*. — **Dewberries**. The fruit of the dewberry bush or blue bramble.

170. **To have my love**, etc. To conduct him to his bed and to attend him when he rises.

181. **Desire you of**. The same construction is found in *The Merchant of Venice* (IV, i, 397): —

> I humbly do desire your grace of pardon.

182. **If I cut my finger**. A cobweb being sometimes used to stanch blood.

Page 65. 186. **Squash**. An unripe peascod.

193. **Your patience**. Your endurance, what you have endured.

Scene II

3. **In extremity**. In the highest degree, to the utmost, excessively.

Page 66. 5. **Night-rule**. Night-order, revelry, or diversion.

7. **Close**. Secret, private, retired.

9. **Patches**. Fools, foolish fellows; used as a familiarly contemptuous term. — **Mechanicals**. Mechanics, artisans.

14. **Who Pyramus presented**. Who played the part of Pyramus.

17. **Nole**. A grotesque word for *head*, like *pate, noddle*. The A. S. *hnoll*, knoll, the top of anything, is the same word.

19. **Mimic.** Actor, player.

21. **Russet-pated choughs.** The chough is a bird closely allied to the jackdaw, but slighter, and more elegant in shape; it has a russet-colored bill and feet and a dark head. *Russet*, in Shakespeare's time, meant dark brown or gray.

25. **At our stamp.** At hearing the footsteps of the fairies, which were powerful enough to 'rock the ground.' Cf. IV, i, 90.

Page 67. 41. **Close.** So as to be unobserved.

Page 68. 62. **What 's this to?** What has this to do with?

68. **Once.** For once. — **Tell true.** Speak truth.

71. **A worm.** A serpent. Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra* (V, ii, 243): —

> Hast thou the pretty worm of Nilus there,
> That kills and pains not?

74. **A mispris'd mood.** A mistaken humor or caprice; a temper of mind arising from a mistake.

78. **Therefor.** For that, thereby.

Page 69. 87. **Tender.** Offer; keeping up the figure of debt and payment in the previous lines.

93. **Confounding oath on oath.** Breaking one oath after another.

96. **Cheer.** Countenance. (Fr. *chère;* It. *ciera*, or *cera*.)

97. **Sighs of love, that costs.** *Costs* is here attracted into the singular by the word *love*, which comes between it and its subject.

101. **The Tartar's bow.** Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, (Bk. II, xiv, 11) reads, 'Yet certain it is that words, as a Tartar's bow, do shoot back upon the understanding of the wisest.' The Tartars were famous for their skill in archery, like the ancient Parthians.

Page 70. 114. **Their fond pageant.** The foolish spectacle they present.

119. **Sport alone.** Sport to which nothing can be compared.

129. **When truth kills truth.** If Lysander's present protestations are true, they destroy the truth of his former vows to Hermia; and the contest between these two truths, which in themselves are holy, must in the issue be devilish and end in the destruction of both.

133. **Tales.** Idle words.

Page 71. 141. **Taurus.** A lofty range of mountains in Asia Minor.

150. **Join in souls.** Combine heart and soul, join heartily.

Page 72. 169. **I will none.** Will none of her, desire her not.

175. **Aby it.** Pay for it, atone for it.

Page 73. 188. **Oes.** Circles, orbs. Circular disks of metal which were used for ornaments were called *oes*.

195. **Injurious**. Insulting.

203. **Two artificial gods**. Two gods exercising their creative skill in art; in this case, the art of embroidery.

213. **Two of the first, like coats in heraldry**. Douce explains: 'Helen says, we had two seeming bodies but only one heart. She then exemplifies her position by a simile — we had two of the first, i. e., bodies, like the double coats in heraldry that belong to man and wife as one person, but which, like our single heart, have but one crest.' Shakespeare here borrows the language of heraldry, in which, when a tincture has been once mentioned in the description of a coat of arms, it is always afterward referred to according to the order in which it occurs in the description; and a charge is accordingly said to be 'of the first,' 'of the second,' etc., if its tincture be the same as that of the field which is always mentioned first, or as that of the second or any other that has been specified.

215. **Rent**. The old form of *rend*.

Page 74. 239. **Hold . . . up**. Keep it going, carry it on.

242. **Such an argument**. A subject for such merriment.

Page 75. 257. **Ethiop**. Hermia was a brunette.

Page 76. 274. **Erewhile**. A short time since, just now.

282. **Juggler**. A trisyllable. — **Canker-blossom**. Generally taken to mean a blossom eaten by a canker, having a show of fairness but hollow within. But it is probably a compound formed like *kill-courtesy* (II, ii, 76), *kill-joy*, and is equivalent to *blossom-canker-er;* Hermia compares Helena to a canker that has stealthily eaten into, and destroyed, Lysander's love for her.

Page 77. 296. **Thou painted maypole**. Stow, in his *Survey of London* (ed. Thoms, p. 54), gives an account of the great maypole in Cornhill, which, when set up on the south side of the church of St. Andrew Undershaft, was higher than the church steeple.

300. **Curst**. Spiteful, mischievous; used of a woman who is a scold.

302. **A right maid**. A true maid.

314. **So**. Provided that.

Page 78. 323. **Shrewd**. Mischievous, especially with the tongue. See II, i, 33, and *Much Ado about Nothing* (II, i, 17): 'Thou wilt never get thee a husband, if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.'

324. **Vixen**. Properly a she-fox; hence applied to an ill-tempered, spiteful woman. The form of the word is especially interesting as being an instance in which the feminine termination *–en* has been preserved.

329. **Minimus**. Smallest thing. — **Hindering knot-grass**. The common knot-grass was formerly believed to have the power of checking the growth of children.

330. **You bead.** As beads were generally black, there is a reference here to Hermia's complexion as well as to her size.

333. **Intend.** Pretend. Demetrius does not think Lysander in earnest.

338. **Cheek by jole.** Side by side, close together, as the cheek to the jole or jaw.

339. **Coil.** Disturbance, turmoil. — **'Long of you.** Owing to you.

Page 79. 352. **Sort.** Turn out, result.

353. **As.** Inasmuch as.

356. **Welkin.** Sky. (A. S. *wolcen*, cloud.)

357. **Acheron.** The river of hell in classical mythology, supposed by Shakespeare to be a pit or lake.

359. **As.** That.

367. **Virtuous property.** Healthful, beneficial quality.

Page 80. 379. **Night's swift dragons.** The chariot of night was drawn by dragons. Cf. *Cymbeline* (II, ii, 48): —

> Swift, swift, you dragons of the night!

380. **Aurora's harbinger.** The morning star. A harbinger originally was one who provided lodgings for a man of rank.

383. **In crossways**, etc. The bodies of those who had committed suicide were buried in crossways, with a stake driven through them. — **Floods.** Rivers; or perhaps any large bodies of water as opposed to land.

389. **The Morning's love.** Cephalus, with whom Oberon had hunted.

Page 81. 402. **Drawn.** With sword drawn.

Page 82. 421. **Ho, ho, ho!** A taunting cry, which, according to Ritson in his note on the passage, is uttered by Puck as his usual exclamation, having forgotten the part he was assuming.

422. **Abide me.** Wait for me, that we may encounter.

432. **Shine comforts.** Cause comforts to shine.

433. **That I may back.** For the omission of the verb of motion before *to* or an adverb of direction see II, i, 142, and IV, i, 24: 'I must to the barber's, monsieur.'

Page 83. 441. **Females.** This word has in Shakespeare its natural sense; it is not limited to a woman specially.

Page 84. 461. **Jack** and **Jill**, as generic names for a man and a woman, are of great antiquity.

ACT IV

Scene I

Page 85. Johnson remarks, 'I see no reason why the fourth Act should begin here, when there seems no interruption of the action.'

2. **Coy.** Coax, caress.

Page 86. 20. **Neaf.** Fist.

21. **Leave your courtesy.** That is, put on your hat, be covered.

24. **Cobweb.** Grey says, 'Without doubt it should be Cavalero Peaseblossom; as for Cavalero Cobweb, he had just been dispatched upon a perilous adventure.'

36. **A bottle of hay.** A bundle or truss of hay. There is a proverb concerning the search for anything hard to find, that it is like looking for a needle in a bottle of hay.

42. **Exposition.** For *disposition*.

45. **Be all ways away.** Disperse yourselves in every direction.

47. **The female ivy.** So called because it is, as it were, married to the elm; as Catullus says of the vine (lxii, 54): *Ulmo conjuncta marito*.

Page 87. 55. **Rounded.** Encircled.

58. **Orient pearls.** Bright, shining pearls. The epithet appears to be originally applied to the pearl and other gems as coming from the orient or east, and to have acquired the general sense of *bright* from the objects which it most commonly describes.

71. **May all.** That is, they may all, etc.

Page 88. 77. **Dian's bud.** If it has a botanical existence at all, this may be the bud of the Agnus castus, or Chaste Tree, of which it is said in Macer's *Herball*, 'The vertue of this herbe is, that he wyll kepe man and woman chaste.' But it is more probably a product of Shakespeare's imagination, which had already endued 'Cupid's flower,' the heart's ease, with qualities not recognized in botany.

86. **Of all these five,** etc. The sense of all these five sleepers.

90. **Rock the ground.** Like a cradle.

91. **Are new in amity.** Are again friends. It is difficult to say whether *new* is here an adjective or adverb; probably the latter.

94. **Posterity.** The first quarto has *prosperity*, which reading is favored by II, i, 73, above.

Page 89. 108. **Our observation.** The 'observance to a morn of May,' spoken of in I, i, 167.

109. **The vaward.** The vanguard (Fr. *avantgarde*) or advanced guard of an army, and hence, the early part of the day.

116. **Hercules.** The son of Zeus and Alcmena, celebrated for

his strength. — **Cadmus.** The first to introduce alphabetic writing among the Greeks.

117. **They bay'd the bear.** According to Pliny (viii, 83), there were neither bears nor boars in the island. We may therefore leave the natural history to adjust itself, as well as the chronology which brings Cadmus with Hercules and Hippolyta into the hunting field together. To *bay*, which signifies *bark*, or *bark at*, is used technically for *to bring to bay*, that is, to drive the pursued animal to turn upon his pursuers.

118. **Hounds of Sparta.** The Spartan hounds were celebrated for their swiftness, and their quickness of scent.

119. **Chiding.** Used of noise simply.

124. **So flew'd.** The flews of a hound are the large overhanging chaps. — **So sanded.** Of such a sandy color.

Page 90. 127. **Mouth.** Used of the bark of a dog.

148. **So far . . . to sleep.** For the omission of *as* after *so* cf. Abbott, sect. 281.

Page 91. 150. **Amazedly.** Confusedly; in a state of astonishment or confusion of mind.

157. **Without.** Beyond the reach of.

158. **You have enough.** You have enough evidence to convict him by his own confession.

168. **I wot not.** I know not. Cf. III, ii, 422. *Wot* is properly a preterite (A. S. *wát*, from *witan*, to know), and is used as a present.

177. **Like in sickness.** Like one sick.

Page 92. 186. **For.** Because. — **Worn.** Exhausted, consumed, wasted.

195. **Like a jewel.** As one finds a jewel which does not belong to him.

Page 93. 211. **Go about.** Endeavor.

214. **A patched fool.** A motley fool; so called from the parti-colored dress worn by jesters.

223. **At her death.** That is, at Thisbe's death: for, though Thisbe is not mentioned, Bottom's head is full of the play.

Scene II

4. **Transported.** Transformed, transfigured; in Starveling's language this is equivalent to *translated* in III, i, 118.

Page 94. 6. **It goes not forward.** Does not go on, take place.

14. **A thing of naught.** A naughty, wicked thing.

17. **We had all been made men.** Our fortunes had all been made.

26. **Courageous.** It is not worth while to guess what Quince

intended to say. He used the first long word that occurred to him without reference to its meaning, a practice not yet altogether extinct.

30. **Right.** Exactly.

Page 95. 34. **Good strings to your beards.** Strings to tie the false beards on with.

37. **Preferred.** Offered for acceptance — if Bottom's words have a meaning, which is not always certain.

ACT V

Scene I

Page 96. 2. **May.** Can.

3. **Toys.** Trifles.

4. **Such seething brains.** Such hot boiling brains, full of wild imaginations.

5. **That apprehend . . . comprehends.** That slightly catch at, as it were, or conceive the idea of more than reason can ever fully grasp or contain.

8. **Compact.** Formed, composed; literally, fastened or knit together.

11. **A brow of Egypt.** A swarthy brow, like a gypsy's.

Page 97. 26. **Constancy.** Consistency, reality.

27. **Howsoever.** Nevertheless, in any case. — **Admirable.** To be wondered at; its etymological meaning.

34. **Our after-supper.** Not the time after supper; but a banquet, so called, which was taken after the meal.

38. **Philostrate.** The master of the revels.

39. **Abridgement.** An entertainment to make the time pass quickly. Used in *Hamlet* (II, ii, 415) in a double sense, the entry of the players cutting short Hamlet's talk: 'For look, where my abridgment comes.'

41. **The lazy time.** Which moves so slowly, and in which we are idle.

Page 98. 42. **A brief.** A short statement, containing the program of the performance.

44. **The Centaurs.** An ancient race of fierce men inhabiting Mt. Pelion in Thessaly; in later accounts, pictured as half horses and half men.

52. **The thrice three Muses,** etc. Warton suggested that 'Shakespeare here perhaps alluded to Spenser's poem, entitled *The Tears of the Muses*, on the neglect and contempt of learning.' It was supposed by Knight that the reference may be to the death of Greene, which took place in 1592.

54. **Critical.** Censorious; as Iago says of himself in *Othello* (II, i, 120): 'For I am nothing, if not critical.'

55. **Not sorting with** or agreeing with; not befitting.

Page 99. 69. **Made mine eyes water.** We must supply *it* as the nominative; that is, the seeing of the play rehearsed.

83. **Simpleness.** Simplicity, innocence.

Page 100. 93. **Clerks.** Scholars, learned men; learning having been at one time almost confined to the clergy.

105. **To my capacity.** So far as I am able to understand.

106. **Address'd.** Ready, prepared.

Page 101. 118. **Doth not stand upon points.** Is not very particular; with a reference to his not minding his stops.

123. **A recorder.** A kind of flageolet, or flute with a mouth-piece.

129. **Certáin.** A convenient word for filling up a line and at the same time conveying no meaning.

136. **Think no scorn.** Did not disdain.

138. **Hight.** Was called; here used as an intentional archaism. It was in common use in old writers.

141. **Fall.** Let fall.

145. **With . . . blade . . . breast.** Shakespeare ridicules the alliteration which the poetasters of his day affected. It was an exaggeration of the principle upon which Anglo-Saxon verse was constructed.

Page 102. 162. **Sinister.** Left; used by Snout for two reasons; first, because it is a long word, and then because it gives a sort of rhyme to *whisper*.

Page 103. 196. **Limander.** Johnson has pointed out that *Limander* and *Helen* are blunders for *Leander* and *Hero*, as *Shafalus* and *Procrus* are for *Cephalus* and *Procris*.

Page 104. 203. **'Tide life, 'tide death.** Whether life or death betide.

Page 105. 243. **The greatest error of all the rest.** Cf. the often-quoted lines of Milton, *Paradise Lost* (IV, 323, 4): —

> Adam the goodliest man of men since born
> His sons, the fairest of her daughters Eve.

247. **It is already in snuff.** Demetrius as a professed joker quibbles upon the word *snuff*. 'To take in snuff' is to take offense; and 'to be in snuff' is to be offended.

Page 106. 267. **Moused.** Torn in pieces; as a cat tears a mouse.

284. **Thrum.** The loose end of a weaver's warp; the word is used of any coarse yarn.

285. **Quell.** Destroy. In *Macbeth* (I, vii, 72) it is used as a substantive for *murder*.

Page 107. 293. **Confound.** Destroy, ruin.

305. **Die, but an ace.** An allusion to the spots on dice.

Page 108. 322. **Means.** Moans. — **Videlicet.** Namely.

335. **Sisters three.** The three Fates, Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, who overrule the lives of men.

339. **Shore.** For *shorn*. The rhyme is too much for Thisbe's grammar.

343. **Imbrue.** Make bloody, stain with blood.

Page 109. 352. **A Bergomask dance.** Hanmer explains this as 'a dance after the manner of the peasants of Bergomasco, a country of Italy, belonging to the Venetians. All the buffoons in Italy affect to imitate the ridiculous jargon of that people, and thence it became a custom to mimic also their manner of dancing.' We must, however, substitute Bergamo for Bergomasco.

359. **Discharged.** Performed.

366. **Palpable-gross.** The grossness or roughness of which is palpable.

367. **The heavy gait.** The slow progress. *Gait* is now used of the manner of walking.

373. **Fordone.** Exhausted.

Page 110. 383. **The triple Hecate's team.** Hecate was Selene, or Luna, in heaven; Artemis, or Diana, on earth; Persephone, or Proserpine, in the lower world. She is therefore represented with three bodies and three heads.

386. **Frolic.** Merry.

389. **To sweep the dust behind the door,** where it would be likely to escape notice. Robin Goodfellow was believed to help good housemaids in their work, and to punish those who were sluttish.

395. **Dance it.** For *it* used indefinitely as the object of a verb without any antecedent cf. Abbott, sect. 226.

Page 111. 408. **The blots of Nature's hand,** like the 'vicious mole of nature' (*Hamlet*, I, iv, 24) were attributed to malignant fairies.

411. **Prodigious.** Monstrous, portentous.

414. **Consecrate.** Consecrated, sacred. This form of participle in words derived from the Latin is of frequent occurrence.

415. **Take his gait.** Take his way or course.

Page 112. 432. **'Scape the serpent's tongue.** That is, without being hissed.

436. **Give me your hands.** Applaud by clapping. Cf. *All's Well that Ends Well* (V, iii, 340): —

> Your gentle hands lend us, and take our hearts.

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR STUDY

By Gerald Abbot Seabury

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STUDY OF A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

ACT I

Scene I

1. Discuss the appropriateness of the title.
2. Explain l. 6.
3. In what sense is *companion* used in l. 15? Give examples of similar usage of the term in other plays.
4. Compare Egeus's accusation of Lysander (ll. 26-45) with

Brabantio's of Othello (*Othello*, I, iii). What common beliefs of the time do these passages illustrate?

5. To what code of laws does Egeus refer (l. 44.)?

6. Ll. 70–78. Note that Shakespeare's plays and poems contain many passages, similar to these lines, directed against isolation and celibacy.

7. What impression of Theseus do you receive from this scene? What qualities of his nature are shown when he reappears in Act V?

8. With what heroic characters in other plays of Shakespeare may Theseus be compared?

9. Note that Lysander's phrase in l. 134 sums up the theme of the play. Also that Shakespeare's sportive treatment of youthful love is suggested by Lysander's statements of the crosses of love, then by Hermia's answers, and finally by Helena's soliloquy at the end of this scene.

10. Note that Act I and Act V are of waking day, of real life, while the intervening acts are of the fantastic life of a dream.

11. L. 169 marks the introduction of the lyrical element which strikes the dream note of the next three acts. How is the atmosphere of unreality first created in this scene?

12. What is the significance of Cupid's 'best arrow with the golden head,' l. 170?

13. Explain l. 249. Justify Helena's betrayal of the secret.

14. What dramatic purpose does Shakespeare attain by making the four lovers leave the city?

15. State the causes for the ensuing action of the play, and show how the action has been thus far foreshadowed.

16. Give some examples of grammatical licenses in the verse, which are not now allowable.

Scene II

1. What ancient custom is referred to in Quince's speech, l. 51?

2. Comment on Bottom's zeal to play all the parts in the forthcoming interlude.

3. Is Bottom intended as a satire on the envies and jealousies of actors?

4. What sports and pastimes are mentioned in this play?

5. What is the meaning of the saying, 'Hold, or cut bowstrings'?

6. Note that the action of this scene takes place on the same day as that of Scene i.

ACT II

Scene I

1. What is the purpose and effect of frequent allusions to 'the moony sphere,' throughout this play? How does the sentiment of moonlight pervade it?
2. Why do the fairies speak and sing in a meter of their own? What is the poetic effect of the trochaic meter?
3. What are the fairy orbs?
4. From what popular notions of the time is this account of Puck derived (ll. 33-57)?
5. What themes did Shakespeare borrow from the folklore of his day?
6. Why should the 'wisest aunt' cry 'Tailor' (l. 54)?
7. What attributes of the fairy people are suggested in their relations with mortals and with each other?
8. How has Shakespeare modified our ideas of the fairy world?
9. Are his fairies, as well as his rustics, thoroughly English?
10. What significance is there in the mention of India in l. 128?
11. With the entrance of the lovers into the dream-world of the wood, mark how their demeanor and actions change. Is this true of the fairies? Of the rustics? Why?
12. Illustrate, from this play, Shakespeare's knowledge of flowers and animals.
13. Name the four groups of characters in this play. How is each group brought into the complications of the plot?

Scene II

1. What is a roundel?
2. What were the duties of the fairies as described by Titania?
3. What, in general, is Shakespeare's method of describing objects and scenery? Illustrate with examples from this and other plays.
4. Who was Philomel? What is the story concerning her?
5. What is the effect of the difference in meter between the speech of the fairies and that of the mortals?
6. Is Puck's mistake purely accidental, or a mischievous prank?
7. Compare Puck with Ariel, in *The Tempest*.
8. Note how the confusion of the dream begins with Puck's mistake.
9. What has been accomplished by Act II?

ACT III

Scene I

1. What is the underlying motive of the rehearsal, i. e., what part has it in the entire play?
2. Contrast the prose of the 'rude mechanic laborers' with the poetry of the fairies.
3. Describe the characters of the 'hempen home-spuns.' Why are these men more clearly individualized than the other mortals in the play?
4. How does Bottom take his strange transformation? What effect does it have on his vanity?
5. What is the meaning of Bottom's speech beginning 'Methinks, mistress' (l. 141)? What impression is Bottom trying to produce?
6. What is the symbolism of the love scene between Bottom and Titania?
7. How does Bottom throw himself into the situation? What poetic significance is there in his failure to realize who Titania is?
8. Contrast the lovely delicacy of Titania's language with Bottom's clownish wit.

Scene II

1. How are the incidents of the preceding acts brought into still further confusion by this scene?
2. What touches of human nature are shown by Oberon? In this respect, how does he compare with Puck?
3. What are Puck's comments on the lovers?
4. How does Lysander compare, how contrast, with Demetrius? Hermia with Helena?
5. What changes in Hermia's and Helena's natures are wrought by the spell of the dream?
6. What is the nearest approach to pathos, in this fantastic comedy?
7. Note that Oberon and Titania, like the lesser fairies, may assume any shape at will, and may, like the mortals, share in the activities of day.
8. What passages in the dispute of the four lovers form the climax of the play?
9. From this point forward, how does 'the coil' unwind?

ACT IV

Scene I

1. Comment on the interplay of the comic and the poetical in this scene.
2. How do Bottom's efforts to appear like a man only go to prove his fitness to be an ass?
3. What effect on Oberon has Titania's dotage?
4. What phrase of Oberon's is perfectly descriptive of the whole play?
5. Show how the character of the play mainly proceeds from its fairy personages, and how the materials are arranged to give the effect of a dream.
6. What change takes place in Titania? What is her dream within a dream?
7. At what time of day do Theseus, Hippolyta, etc., now appear? What is the significance of this?
8. What is Shakespeare's purpose in making a reference to hounds and hunting (l. 110)?
9. What statements of their experiences do the four lovers give? How do Theseus and Hippolyta understand this discourse? (Cf. Act V.)
10. What does Bottom say about his dream? Explain 'a patch'd fool' (l. 214).
11. What has been accomplished by this scene toward the unraveling of the plot?
12. Select four lines not in normal iambic pentameter, scanning each to prove your point.

ACT V

1. What is the main theme and purpose of this act?
2. Show how, in the course of the play, each group of characters is brought into relation with another and made to parody itself by contrast.
3. What insight into Theseus's nature is given by his famous speech, ll. 4–18?
4. Discuss Hippolyta's comments on the 'story of the night,' ll. 23–27.
5. What is the allusion in ll. 52, 53?
6. Add to your estimate of Theseus, from ll. 89–105.
7. Who is the hero of the play? Defend your answer.
8. Is it probable that Shakespeare intended Quince's prologue to serve as a prologue not only to the comic interlude, but also to his own play?

9. Reconstruct Quince's prologue as it should read, had he stood 'upon points.'

10. Discuss Theseus's reply (l. 211) to Hippolyta's criticism, regarding it as Shakespeare's definition of the right attitude of mind toward a drama; or of his apology for the actors, playwrights, and theaters of his day.

11. Name three kinds of supernatural beings who figure in Shakespeare's plays.

12. With what words of Theseus does the human element in this play cease?

13. What examples of balance and proportion are found in this play.

14. Comment on the use of prose, verse, and rhyme in this scene. What is the appropriateness of each where it is used? What is Shakespeare's usual custom in the use of these three forms. Illustrate from this play.

15. Are the concluding verses sung by the fairies a part of the action, or an epilogue?

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Whence did Shakespeare derive the materials for *A Midsummer-Night's Dream?*

2. Give some account of the early editions of this play.

3. Discuss the question of the date of the play.

4. At what period of Shakespeare's dramatic life was the play written? Discuss the question.

5. What use is made of rhyme in this play? Give a general account of Shakespeare's use of rhyme in his development as a dramatic poet.

6. Give Mr. Daniel's 'time-analysis' of the play (p. 14). Point out any inaccuracies of time or inconsistencies in the action you may have observed.

7. Discuss the question of the representation of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* on the stage.

8. Illustrate from this play that some words were accented in Shakespeare's time nearer the beginning, and others nearer the end, than in modern usage.

9. Give examples of double negatives, double comparatives, adjectives used substantively.

10. Give instances of Shakespeare's play on words.

11. Some of the most commonly quoted passages of Shakespeare occur in this play. Give as many of these as you remember.

12. Explain any grammatical point worth noticing in the following passages: —

(*a*) Ere I will yield my virgin patent up
Unto his lordship, whose unwishèd yoke
My soul consents not to give sovereignty. — Act I, i, 80–82.

(*b*) I am belov'd of beautous Hermia. — Act I, i, 104.

(*c*) By all the vows that ever men have broke,
In number more than ever women spoke. — Act I, i, 175–176.

(*d*) And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,
So I, admiring of his qualities. — Act I, i, 230–231.

(*e*) You were best to call them generally. — Act I, ii, 2.

(*f*) An I may hide my face, let me play Thisbe too.
— Act I, ii, 53–54.

(*g*) How long within this wood intend you stay? — Act II, i, 134.

(*h*) Thou shalt not from this grove. — Act II, i, 142.

(*i*) I'll follow thee, and make a heaven of hell,
To die upon the hand I love so well. — Act II, i, 239–240.

(*j*) But there is two hard things. — Act III, i, 45.

(*k*) This grisly beast, which Lion hight by name. — Act V, i, 142.

13. Explain the allusions in the following passages: —

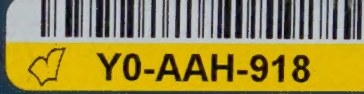
(*a*) For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,
And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger;
At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,
Troop home to churchyards. — Act III, ii, 379–382.

(*b*) The cowslips tall her pensioners be:
In their gold coats spots you see. — Act II, i, 10–11.

(*c*) Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase. — Act II, i, 227.

(*d*) Well, we will have such a prologue: and it shall be written in eight and six. — Act III, i, 21–22.

(*e*) I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear
With hounds of Sparta. — Act IV, i, 116–118.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